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Stories by foreign authors

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STORIES BY FOREIGN AUTHORS

FRENCH

- THE SIEGE OF BERLIN BY ALPHONSE DAUDET
THE JUGGLER OF NOTRE DAME BY ANATOLE FRANCE
UNCLE AND NEPHEW BY EDMOND ABOUT
ANOTHER GAMBLER BY PAUL BOURGET
THE NECKLACE BY GUY DE MAUPASSANT
THE BLACK PEARL BY VICTORIEN SARDOU

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THE SIEGE OF BERLIN

BY

ALPHONSE DAUDET

From "Tales from Many Sources," published by
Dodd, Mead & Co.

THE SIEGE OF BERLIN

BY ALPHONSE DAUDET

WE were going up the Champs Elysées with Doctor V——, gathering from the walls pierced by shell, the pavement ploughed by grape-shot, the history of the besieged Paris, when just before reaching the Place de l'Etoile, the doctor stopped and pointed out to me one of those large corner houses, so pompously grouped around the Arc de Triomphe.

"Do you see," said he, "those four closed windows on the balcony up there? In the beginning of August, that terrible month of August of '70, so laden with storm and disaster, I was summoned there to attend a case of apoplexy. The sufferer was Colonel Jouve, an old Cuirassier of the First Empire, full of enthusiasm for glory and patriotism, who, at the commencement of the war, had taken an apartment with a balcony in the Champs Elysées—for what do you think? To assist at the triumphal entry of our troops! Poor old man! The news of Wissembourg arrived as he was rising from table. On reading

the name of Napoleon at the foot of that bulletin of defeat he fell senseless.

"I found the old Cuirassier stretched upon the floor, his face bleeding and inert as from the blow of a club. Standing, he would have been very tall; lying, he looked immense; with fine features, beautiful teeth, and white curling hair, carrying his eighty years as though they had been sixty. Beside him knelt his granddaughter in tears. She resembled him. Seeing them side by side, they reminded me of two Greek medallions stamped with the same impress, only the one was antique, earth-stained, its outlines somewhat worn; the other beautiful and clear, in all the lustre of freshness.

"The child's sorrow touched me. Daughter and granddaughter of soldiers,—for her father was on MacMahon's staff,—the sight of this old man stretched before her evoked in her mind another vision no less terrible. I did my best to reassure her, though in reality I had but little hope. We had to contend with hæmoptysis, from which at eighty there is small chance of recovery.

"For three days the patient remained in the same condition of immobility and stupor. Meanwhile came the news of Reichshofen—you remember how strangely? Till the evening we all believed in a great victory—20,000 Prussians killed, the Crown Prince prisoner.

"I cannot tell by what miracle, by what magnetic current, an echo of this national joy can have reached our poor invalid, hitherto deaf to all around him; but that evening, on approaching the bed, I found a new man. His eye was almost clear, his speech less difficult, and he had the strength to smile and to stammer:

"'Victory, victory.'

"'Yes, Colonel, a great victory.' And as I gave the details of MacMahon's splendid success I saw his features relax and his countenance brighten.

"When I went out his granddaughter was waiting for me, pale and sobbing.

"'But he is saved,' said I, taking her hands.

"The poor child had hardly courage to answer me. The true Reichshofen had just been announced, MacMahon a fugitive, the whole army crushed. We looked at each other in consternation, she anxious at the thought of her father, I trembling for the grandfather. Certainly he would not bear this new shock. And yet what could we do? Let him enjoy the illusion which had revived him? But then we should have to deceive him.

"'Well, then, I will deceive him,' said the brave girl, and hastily wiping away her tears she re-entered her grandfather's room with a beaming face.

"It was a hard task she had set herself. For

the first few days it was comparatively easy, as the old man's head was weak, and he was as credulous as a child. But with returning health came clearer ideas. It was necessary to keep him *au courant* with the movements of the army and to invent military bulletins. It was pitiful to see that beautiful girl bending night and day over her map of Germany, marking it with little flags, forcing herself to combine the whole of a glorious campaign—Bazaine on the road to Berlin, Frossard in Bavaria, MacMahon on the Baltic. In all this she asked my counsel, and I helped her as far as I could, but it was the grandfather who did the most for us in this imaginary invasion. He had conquered Germany so often during the First Empire. He knew all the moves beforehand. 'Now they should go there. This is what they will do,' and his anticipations were always realized, not a little to his pride. Unfortunately, we might take towns and gain battles, but we never went fast enough for the Colonel. He was insatiable. Every day I was greeted with a fresh feat of arms.

"'Doctor, we have taken Mayence,' said the young girl, coming to meet me with a heartrending smile, and through the door I heard a joyous voice crying :

"'We are getting on, we are getting on. In a week we shall enter Berlin.'

"At that moment the Prussians were but a

week from Paris. At first we thought it might be better to move to the provinces, but once out of doors, the state of the country would have told him all, and I thought him still too weak, too enervated, to know the truth. It was therefore decided that they should stay where they were.

"On the first day of the investment I went to see my patient—much agitated, I remember, and with that pang in my heart which we all felt at knowing that the gates of Paris were shut, that the war was under our walls, that our suburbs had become our frontiers.

"I found the old man jubilant and proud.

" 'Well,' said he, 'the siege has begun.'

"I looked at him stupefied.

" 'How, Colonel, do you know?'

"His granddaughter turned to me, 'Oh, yes, Doctor, it is great news. The siege of Berlin has commenced.'

"She said this composedly, while drawing out her needle. How could he suspect anything? He could not hear the cannon nor see that unhappy Paris, so sullen and disorderly. All that he saw from his bed was calculated to keep up his delusion. Outside was the Arc de Triomphe, and in the room quite a collection of souvenirs of the First Empire. Portraits of marshals, engravings of battles, the King of Rome in his baby-robes; the stiff consoles, ornamented with trophies in brass, were covered with Imperial relics, medals,

bronzes ; a stone from St. Helena under a glass shade ; miniatures all representing the same be-curled lady, in ball-dress, in a yellow gown with leg-of-mutton sleeves and light eyes ; and all—the consoles, the King of Rome, the medals, the yellow ladies with short waists and sashes under their arms—in that style of awkward stiffness which was the grace of 1806.—Good Colonel ! it was this atmosphere of victory and conquest, rather than all we could say, which made him believe so naïvely in the siege of Berlin.

“From that day our military operations became much simpler. Taking Berlin was merely a matter of patience. Every now and then, when the old man was tired of waiting, a letter from his son was read to him—an imaginary letter of course, as nothing could enter Paris, and as, since Sedan, MacMahon’s aide-de-camp had been sent to a German fortress. Can you not imagine the despair of the poor girl, without tidings of her father, knowing him to be a prisoner, deprived of all comforts, perhaps ill, and yet obliged to make him speak in cheerful letters, somewhat short, as from a soldier in the field, always advancing in a conquered country. Sometimes, when the invalid was weaker than usual, weeks passed without fresh news. But was he anxious and unable to sleep, suddenly a letter arrived from Germany which she read gayly at his bedside, struggling hard with her tears. The

Colonel listened religiously, smiling with an air of superiority, approving, criticising, explaining; but it was in the answers to his son that he was at his best. 'Never forget that you are a Frenchman,' he wrote; 'be generous to those poor people. Do not make the invasion too hard for them.' His advice was never ending; edifying sermons about respect of property, the politeness due to ladies,—in short, quite a code of military honor for the use of conquerors. With all this he put in some general reflections on politics and the conditions of the peace to be imposed on the vanquished. With regard to the latter, I must say he was not exacting:

"'The war indemnity and nothing else. It is no good to take provinces. Can one turn Germany into France?'

"He dictated this with so firm a voice, and one felt so much sincerity in his words, so much patriotic faith, that it was impossible to listen to him unmoved.

"Meanwhile the siege went on—not the siege of Berlin, alas! We were at the worst period of cold, of bombardment, of epidemic, of famine. But, thanks to our care, and the indefatigable tenderness which surrounded him, the old man's serenity was never for a moment disturbed. Up to the end I was able to procure white bread and fresh meat for him, but for him only. You could not imagine anything more touching than those

breakfasts of the grandfather, so innocently egotistic, sitting up in bed, fresh and smiling, the napkin tied under his chin, at his side his granddaughter, pale from her privations, guiding his hands, making him drink, helping him to eat all these good, forbidden things. Then, revived by the repast, in the comfort of his warm room, with the wintry wind shut out and the snow eddying about the window, the old Cuirassier would recall his Northern campaigns and would relate to us that disastrous retreat in Russia where there was nothing to eat but frozen biscuit and horse-flesh.

“Can you understand that, little one? We ate horseflesh.”

“I should think she did understand it. For two months she had tasted nothing else. As convalescence approached our task increased daily in difficulty. The numbness of the Colonel’s senses, as well as of his limbs, which had hitherto helped us so much, was beginning to pass away. Once or twice already, those terrible volleys at the Porte Maillot had made him start and prick up his ears like a war-horse; we were obliged to invent a recent victory of Bazaine’s before Berlin and salvoes fired from the Invalides in honor of it. Another day (the Thursday of Buzenval I think it was) his bed had been pushed to the window, whence he saw some of the National Guard massed upon the Avenue de la Grande Armée.

“‘What soldiers are those?’ he asked, and we heard him grumbling beneath his teeth :

“‘Badly drilled, badly drilled.’

“Nothing came of this, but we understood that henceforth greater precautions were necessary. Unfortunately, we were not careful enough.

“One evening I was met by the child in much trouble.

“‘It is to-morrow they make their entry,’ she said.

“Could the grandfather’s door have been open? In thinking of it since, I remember that all that evening his face wore an extraordinary expression. Probably he had overheard us ; only we spoke of the Prussians and he thought of the French, of the triumphal entry he had so long expected, MacMahon descending the Avenue amidst flowers and flourish of trumpets, his own son riding beside the marshal, and he himself on his balcony, in full uniform as at Lützen, saluting the ragged colors and the eagles blackened by powder.

“Poor Colonel Jouve ! He no doubt imagined that we wished to prevent his assisting at the defile of our troops, lest the emotion should prove too much for him, and therefore took care to say nothing to us ; but the next day, just at the time the Prussian battalions cautiously entered the long road leading from the Port^e Maillot to the Tuileries, the window up there

was softly opened and the Colone' appeared on the balcony with his helmet, his sword, all his long unused, but glorious apparel of Milhaud's Cuirassiers.

"I often ask myself what supreme effort of will, what sudden impulse of fading vitality, had placed him thus erect in harness.

"All we know is that he was there, standing at the railing, wondering to find the wide avenue so silent, the shutters all closed, Paris like a great lazaret, flags everywhere, but such strange ones, white with red crosses, and no one to meet our soldiers.

"For a moment he may have thought himself mistaken.

"But no! there, behind the Arc de Triomphe, there was a confused sound, a black line advancing in the growing daylight—then, little by little, the spikes of the helmets glisten, the little drums of Jena begin to beat, and under the Arc de l'Etoile, accompanied by the heavy tramp of the troops, by the clatter of sabres, bursts forth Schubert's Triumphal March.

"In the dead silence of the streets was heard a cry, a terrible cry:

"'To arms!—to arms!—the Prussians.' And the four Uhlans of the advance guard might have seen up there, on the balcony, a tall old man stagger, wave his arms, and fall. This time Colonel Jouve was dead."

THE JUGGLER OF NOTRE DAME
BY
ANATOLE FRANCE

From "Tales from a Mother-of-Pearl Casket," translated by Henri Pène du Bois Published by George H. Richmond & Co.

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THE JUGGLER OF NOTRE DAME

BY ANATOLE FRANCE

I.

THERE lived in France, in the time of King Louis, a poor juggler, native of Compiègne, named Barnabas, who went through the cities making tricks of strength and skill. On market days he extended on the public square an old carpet, all worn out, and, after having attracted the children and idlers by pleasing phrases, which he had learned from an old juggler and of which he never changed anything, he assumed attitudes which were not natural, and he placed a pewter plate on his nose and balanced it there. The crowd looked at him at first with indifference.

But when, with hands and head on the ground, he threw in the air and caught with his feet six copper balls which shone in the sun, or when, throwing himself backward till his neck touched his heels, he gave to his body the form of a perfect wheel, and juggled, in that posture, with twelve knives, a murmur of admiration rose from the spectators, and pieces of money rained on the carpet.

Nevertheless, like most of those who live off

their talents, Barnabas of Compiègne had a great deal of trouble to live.

Earning his bread by the sweat of his brow, he carried more than his share of the miseries attached to the sin of Adam, our father.

Moreover, he could not work as much as he wished. To display his fine learning, as for the trees to give flowers and fruits, he needed the warmth of the sun and the light of day. In winter he was only a tree despoiled of its leaves and almost dead. The congealed earth was hard for the juggler. And, like the cicada whereof Marie of France writes, he suffered from cold and hunger in the bad season. But, as his heart was simple, he suffered his ills in patience.

He had never reflected on the origin of riches nor on the inequality of human conditions. He believed firmly that, if this world is bad, the other world cannot fail to be good, and this hope supported him. He did not imitate the miscreants who have sold their souls to the devil. He never took the name of God in vain ; he lived honestly, and, although he had no wife, he did not covet his neighbor's, for woman is the enemy of strong men, as appears by the history of Samson which is related in the Scriptures.

In truth, his mind was not inclined toward material desires, and it would have cost him more to renounce mugs than women. For, although he never failed in sobriety, he liked to drink

when it was warm. He was a good man, fearing God and very devout to the Holy Virgin.

He never failed, when he went into a church, to kneel before the image of the Mother of God and to address to her this prayer :

"Madame, take care of my life until it may please God that I shall die, and when I die let me have the joys of paradise."

II.

ONE night, after a day of rain, while he was walking, sad and bent, carrying under his arm his balls and his knives hidden in his old carpet, and seeking for a barn where he might go to bed, without supper, he saw on the road a monk who was going the same way, and bowed to him courteously. As they were walking together they exchanged ideas.

"Friend," said the monk, "how is it that you are dressed in green? Is it to play the personage of a clown in some mystery-play?"

"No, father," replied Barnabas, "such as I am, I am Barnabas, and my trade is that of a juggler. It would be the most beautiful trade in the world if one in it could eat every day."

"Friend Barnabas," said the monk, "be careful of what you are saying. There is no more beautiful trade than the monastic one. In it are

celebrated the praise of God, of the Virgin, and the saints, and the life of the monk is a perpetual canticle to the Lord."

Barnabas replied :

" Father, I confess that I have talked like an ignorant man. Your trade may not be compared with mine, and, although there is some merit in dancing while holding a coin balanced on a stick on one's nose, this merit does not reach the height of yours. I would like to sing every day like you, father, the office of the Holy Virgin, to whom I have devoted a special piety. I would willingly abandon the art in which I am known from Soissons to Beauvais, in more than six hundred cities and villages, in order to embrace the monastic life."

The monk was moved by the juggler's simplicity, and, as the monk was not lacking in discernment, he recognized in Barnabas one of the men of good-will whereof our Lord has said : " Let peace be with them on earth." That is why he replied :

" Friend Barnabas, come with me, and I will make you enter the convent whereof I am the prior. The one who led Mary the Egyptian in the desert placed me on your path to lead you in the way of salvation."

It is thus that Barnabas became a monk. In the convent where he was received, the religious celebrated the cult of the Holy Virgin, and each

one used in her service all the learning and all the skill that God had given to him.

The prior, for his part, composed books which treated, in accordance with the rules of scholasticism, of the virtues of the Mother of God.

Friar Maurice copied with a learned hand these treatises on leaves of vellum.

Friar Alexander painted fine miniatures. One could see in them the Queen of Heaven, seated on the throne of Solomon, at the foot of which four lions watch. Around her head, which has a halo, are seven doves, which are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost: gifts of fear, of piety, of science, of force, of advice, of intelligence, and of wisdom. She had as companions six virgins with golden hair: Humility, Prudence, Retirement, Respect, Virginity, and Obedience.

At her feet two small nude and white figures stood in respectful attitude. They were souls that implored for their salvation, and certainly not in vain, her all-powerful intercession.

Friar Alexander represented on another page Eve with eyes toward Mary, so that one might see at the same time the sin and the redemption, the humiliated woman and the exalted Virgin. One could admire, moreover, in this book the Well of Living Waters, the Fountain, the Lily, the Moon, the Sun, and the Garden sung in the canticle, the Door of Heaven and the City of God, and these were images of the Virgin.

Friar Marbode was, similarly, one of the most tender children of Mary.

He carved stone images incessantly, so that his beard, his eyebrows, and his hair were white with dust, and his eyes were perpetually swollen and tearful ; but he was full of strength and of joy in his old age, and, visibly, the Queen of Paradise protected the declining years of her child. Marbode represented her seated in a pulpit, with a nimbus around her forehead, the orb of which was in pearls. And he was careful that the folds of her gown should cover the feet of the one whereof the prophet has said, "My beloved is like a closed garden."

At times, also, he represented her with the features of a child full of grace, and she seemed to say, "Lord, you are my Lord !"

There were also in the convent poets who composed Latin hymns in honor of the Virgin Mary, and there was even a Picardian who related the miracles of Notre Dame in ordinary terms and in rhyming verses.

III.

SEEING such a competition in praises and such a beautiful harvest of work, Barnabas lamented his ignorance and his simplicity.

"Alas !" he sighed, while he walked alone in the small garden of the convent, "I am very

unfortunate not to be able, like my brothers, to praise worthily the Holy Mother of God, to whom I have devoted the tenderness of my heart. Alas ! alas ! I am a rough and artless man, and I have at my service, Madame the Virgin, neither edifying sermons nor treatises well divided according to the rules, nor fine paintings, nor statues correctly sculptured, nor verses walking in measure. I have nothing, alas ! ”

He moaned in this manner and yielded to sadness. One night that the monks were conversing, he heard one of them relate the history of a religious who knew how to recite only the Ave Maria. This monk was disdained for his ignorance : but when he died five roses came out of his mouth in honor of the five letters of the name of Maria, and thus his sanctity was manifested.

While he listened to this tale, Barnabas admired once more the kindness of the Virgin ; but he was not consoled by the example of that death, for his heart was full of zeal, and he wished to serve the glory of his lady who is in heaven.

He sought for the means of doing this without being able to find them, and his affliction increased day by day ; but one morning he awoke joyfully, ran to the chapel, and stayed there alone for more than an hour. He returned after dinner.

And from this moment he went every day to that chapel, at the hour when it was deserted, and

passed there a great part of the time that the other monks consecrated to the liberal and mechanical arts. He was no longer sad and he no longer complained.

A behavior so singular excited the curiosity of the monks.

They asked themselves in the community why Friar Barnabas made retreats so frequently.

The prior, whose duty it is to ignore nothing of the behavior of the religious, decided to watch Barnabas in his solitude. One day that he was closeted in the chapel, Dom Prior came, accompanied by two elders of the convent, and observed through cracks in the door the things that were happening in the interior.

They saw Barnabas, who, before the altar of the Holy Virgin, head downward, his feet in the air, was juggling with six copper balls and twelve knives. He was doing, in honor of the Holy Mother of God, the feats of his trade which had provoked the most applause. Not comprehending that this simple man thus placed his talent and his learning at the service of the Holy Virgin, the two elders cried that it was a sacrilege.

The prior knew that Barnabas's mind was innocent, but thought that he had fallen into insanity. They were preparing to drag him out of the chapel as quickly as they could, when they saw the Holy Virgin descend the stairs of the

altar in order to wipe with a fold of her blue mantle the perspiration which fell from the juggler's forehead.

Then the prior, kneeling with his face against the marble slabs, recited these words:

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

"Amen," replied the elders, kissing the earth.

UNCLE AND NEPHEW

BY

EDMOND ABOUT

From "The Notary's Nose," published by Henry Holt
& Company.

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UNCLE AND NEPHEW

BY EDMUND ABOUT

I.

I AM sure that you have passed Doctor Auvray's house twenty times without supposing that miracles are performed there. It is a modest-looking house, without any display or any sign: it does not even bear on its door the unattractive inscription—*Maison de santé*. It is situated near the end of the Avenue Montaigne, between Prince Soltikoff's gothic palace and the great Triat's gymnasium where they regenerate mankind on the trapèze. A gate, painted in imitation of bronze, opens upon a little garden of lilacs and roses. The porter's lodge is at the right; the building at the left contains the doctor's rooms, and those of his wife and daughter. The principal building is at the remote end: it turns its back upon the avenue, and opens all its windows to the southeast on a little park, well planted with chestnuts and lindens. There the doctor cares for, and often cures, people who have lost their minds. I would not take you into his establishment, if you ran any risk of meeting all kinds of insanity; but do not be afraid; you will not have the distressing spec-

tacle of imbecility, paralytic insanity, or even utter loss of intelligence. M. Auvray has created for himself what is called a specialty: he treats monomania. He is an excellent man, full of intelligence and learning: a real philosopher and pupil of Esquirol and Laromiguière. If you were ever to meet him, with his bald head, well-shaven chin, black vestments, and placid face, you would not know whether he were doctor, professor, or priest. When he opens his heavy eyes, you expect him to say: "My child!" His eyes are not ugly, considering how they protrude, and they throw around him glances comprehensive, limpid, and serene, beneath which you see a world of kindly thoughts. Those large eyes are the open doors of a beautiful soul. M. Auvray's vocation was decided when he was at the medical school. He gave himself up passionately to the study of monomania—that curious disturbance of the faculties which is seldom due to a physical cause, which does not answer to any perceptible lesion in the nervous system, and which is cured by moral treatment. He was seconded in his observations by a young female superintendent of one of the wards, who was quite pretty and very well educated. He fell in love with her, and as soon as he got his degree married her. It was a modest entrance upon life. Nevertheless, he had a little property which he devoted to founding the establishment

you know. With a touch of charlatanism, he could have made a fortune; he was satisfied to make his expenses. He avoided notoriety, and whenever he attained a marvellous cure, he did not proclaim it from the housetops. His reputation made itself, and almost in spite of him. His treatise on *Monomanie raisonnée*, which he published through Baillière in 1842, is in its sixth edition without the author having sent a single copy to the papers. Modesty is certainly good in itself, but it ought not to be carried to an extreme. Mlle. Auvray has not more than twenty thousand francs dowry, and she will be twenty-two years old in April.

About a fortnight ago (it was, I think, on Wednesday, December 13th), a cab stopped before M. Auvray's gate. The driver rang, and the gate was opened. The carriage went on to the doctor's house, and two men briskly entered his office. The servant begged them to sit down and wait till the doctor had finished his rounds. It was ten o'clock in the morning.

One of the strangers was a man of fifty, large, brown, full-blooded, of high color, passably ugly, and specially ill-made; his ears were pierced, his hands large, and his thumbs enormous. Fancy a workman dressed in his employer's clothes: such is M. Morlot.

His nephew, François Thomas, is a young man of twenty-three, hard to describe, because he is

just like everybody else. He is neither large nor small, handsome nor ugly, developed like a Hercules nor spindled like a dandy, but, maintaining the happy medium throughout, unobtrusive from head to foot, hair of no particular color, and mind and clothes of the same. When he entered M. Auvray's house, he seemed very much agitated; he walked up and down apparently in a rage, would not keep still anywhere, looked at twenty things at once, and would have handled them all if his hands had not been tied.

"Calm yourself," said his uncle; "what I'm doing is for your good. You'll be happy here, and the doctor will cure you."

"I'm not sick. Why have you tied me?"

"Because you would have thrown me out of the carriage. You're not in your right mind, my poor François; M. Auvray will restore you."

"I reason as clearly as you do, uncle, and I don't know what you're talking about. My mind is clear, my judgment sound, and my memory excellent. Would you like me to repeat some verses? Shall I translate some Latin? Here's a Tacitus in this bookcase. . . . If you would prefer a different experiment, I can solve a problem in Arithmetic or Geometry. . . . You don't care to have me? Very well! Listen to what we have done this morning:

"You came in at eight o'clock, not to wake me, for I was not asleep, but to get me out of

bed. I dressed myself, without Germain's help ; you asked me to go with you to Dr. Auvray's ; I refused ; you insisted ; I got angry ; Germain helped you to tie my hands ; I 'll discharge him to-night. I owe him thirteen days' wages : that is thirteen francs, as I engaged him at thirty francs a month. You owe him damages : you are the cause of his losing his Christmas-gift. Is this reasoning ? And do you still think you can make me out crazy ? Ah ! my dear uncle, take a better view of things ! Remember that my mother was your sister ! What would she say—my poor mother !—if she were to see me here ? I bear you no ill-will, and everything can be arranged pleasantly. You have a daughter, Mlle. Claire Morlot. . . .”

“Ah ! there I have you ! You see clearly enough that you are out of your head. I have a daughter ? I ? But I 'm a bachelor. A confirmed bachelor !”

“You have a daughter,” replied François mechanically.

“My poor nephew ! Let us see. Listen to me carefully. Have you a cousin ?”

“A cousin ? No. I have no cousin. Oh ! you won't find me out of my reckoning ; I have no cousins of either sex.”

“I am your uncle ; is n't that so ?”

“Yes, you are my uncle, although you forgot it this morning.”

"If I had a daughter she would be your cousin; now you have no cousin, therefore I have no daughter."

"You're right. I had the happiness of seeing her this summer at Ems Springs, with her mother. I love her; I have reason to think that I am not indifferent to her, and I have the honor to ask you for her hand."

"Whose hand?"

"Mademoiselle's hand—your daughter's."

"Well, so be it," thought M. Morlot; "M. Auvray will be very skilful if he cures him. I will pay six thousand francs board from my nephew's income. Six from thirty leaves twenty-four. I shall be rich. Poor François!"

He seated himself and casually opened a book. "Sit down there," he said to the young man; "I'll read you something. Try to listen: it will calm you down." He read:

"Monomania is the persistence of one idea, the exclusive domination of a single passion. Its seat is in the heart; there it must be sought and there it must be cured. Its cause is love, fear, vanity, ambition, remorse. It displays itself by the same symptoms as passion generally; sometimes by joy, gayety, daring, and noise; sometimes by timidity, sadness, and silence."

During the reading, François seemed to grow quiet and drop asleep. "Bravo!" thought M. Morlot. "Here's a miracle performed by medi-

cine already: it puts a man to sleep who has been neither hungry nor drowsy." François was not asleep, but he played possum to perfection. He nodded at proper intervals, and regulated the heavy monotone of his breathing with mathematical accuracy. Uncle Morlot was taken in he continued reading in a subdued voice, then yawned, then stopped reading, then let his book slip down, then shut his eyes, and then went sound asleep, much to the satisfaction of his nephew, who watched him maliciously out of the corner of his eye.

François began by moving his chair: M. Morlot budged no more than a tree. François walked about the room, making his shoes creak on the inlaid floor: M. Morlot began snoring. Then the crazy man went to the writing-table, found an eraser, pushed it into a corner, fixed it firmly by the handle, and cut the cord which bound his arms. He freed himself, recovered the use of his hands, repressed a cry of joy, and stealthily approached his uncle. In two minutes M. Morlot was firmly bound, but with so much delicacy that his sleep was not even troubled.

François admired his work, and picked up the book which had slipped to the floor. It was the last edition of the *Monomanie raisonnée*. He took it into a corner, and set to reading like a bookworm, while he awaited the doctor's arrival.

II.

It now becomes necessary for me to recount the antecedents of François and his uncle. François was the son of a late toy dealer in the Passage du Saumon named M. Thomas. Toy-selling is a good business; a hundred per cent. is cleared on almost every article. Since his father's death, François had enjoyed a competence of the degree called "honorable," undoubtedly because it obviates the necessity of doing dishonorable things; perhaps, too, because it makes practicable the doing of the honors to one's friends: he had thirty thousand francs income.

His tastes were extremely simple, as I think I have told you. He had an innate preference for things which are not glaring, and naturally selected his gloves, vests, and coats from the series of modest colors lying between black and brown. He did not remember having dreamed of plumes, even in his tenderest childhood, and the ribbons most desired had never troubled his sleep. He never carried an opera-glass, because, he said, his eyes were good; nor wore a scarf-pin, because his scarf would keep in place without a pin; but the real reason was that he was afraid of attracting attention. The very polish of his boots dazzled him. He would have been doomed to wretchedness if the accident of birth had afflicted him with a noticeable name. If, for the sake of

giving him one, his sponsors had called him Americ or Fernand, he would never have signed it in his life. Happily, his names were as unobtrusive as if he had chosen them himself.

His timidity prevented him from entering upon any career. After crossing the threshold of his baccalaureate, he stopped in that great door which opens upon everything, and stood rapt in contemplation before the seven or eight roads which were lying before him. The bar seemed to him too boisterous, medicine too devoid of rest, a tutorship too arrogant, commerce too complicated, the civil service too constraining.

As to the army, it was useless to think of that : not that he was afraid to fight, but he trembled at the idea of wearing a uniform. He remained, then, in his original way of life, not because it was the easiest, but because it was the most obscure : he lived on his income.

As he had not earned his money himself, he lent it freely. In return for so rare a virtue, Heaven gave him plenty of friends. He loved them all sincerely, and acceded to their wishes with very good grace. When he met one of them on the Boulevard, he was always the one to be taken by the arm, turned about, and taken where his friend desired. Don't think that he was either foolish, shallow, or ignorant. He knew three or four modern languages, Latin, Greek, and everything else usually learned at college ;

he had some ideas of commerce, manufactures, agriculture, and literature, and he estimated a new book well, if there was nobody near to listen to his opinion.

But it was among women that his weakness showed itself in its full strength. It was a necessity of his nature always to be in love with somebody, and if in rubbing his eyes in the morning he saw no gleam of love on the horizon, he got up out of sorts and infallibly put his stockings on wrong side out. Whenever he was at a concert or a play, he began by searching among the audience for some face that pleased him, and was in love with it the whole evening. If he found one to suit him, the play was fine, the concert delicious; otherwise, everybody played badly or sang false. His heart so abhorred a vacuum, that in presence of a mediocre beauty it spurred him to believe her perfect. You will realize without my help that this universal susceptibility was by no means licentiousness, but innocence. He loved all women without telling them so, for he had never dared to speak to one. He was the most candid and inoffensive of roués; Don Juan, if you please, but before Donna Julia.

When he was in love, he rehearsed to himself courageous declarations, which regularly died upon his lips. He paid his court; laid open the very bottom of his soul; held long conversations and charming dialogues, in which he made both

the questions and replies. He made appeals energetic enough to soften rocks, and warm enough to melt ice; but no woman was drawn towards him by his mute aspirations: one must *want*, to be loved. There is a great difference between desiring and wanting; desiring floats easily upon the clouds: wanting runs on foot among the flints. One watches for every chance, the other demands nothing but its own existence; wanting marches straight to its point over hedges and ditches, ravines and mountains; desiring remains seated at home and cries in its sweetest voice:

"Clocher, clocher, arrive, ou je suis mort!"

Nevertheless, in the August of this very year, four months before pinioning his uncle's arms, François had dared to love face to face. At the Ems Springs, he had met a young girl almost as shy as himself, whose shuddering timidity had given him courage. She was a Parisienne, frail and delicate as fruit grown on the shady side of a wall: transparent as those lovely children whose blue blood can be seen distinctly under their skin. She accompanied her mother, whom an inveterate disorder (a chronic trouble of the throat, if I am not mistaken) obliged to take the waters. Mother and daughter must have lived apart from the world, for they regarded the boisterous crowd of bathers with long looks of astonishment.

François was casually presented to them by one of his friends, who had become cured and was going to Italy through Germany. He attended them assiduously for a month, and was virtually their only companion. For sensitive souls, the crowd is a vast solitude; the more noise the world makes around them, the more do they shrink into their corner to whisper into each other's ears. The young Parisienne and her mother went right into François' heart as naturally as from one room to the next, and found it pleasant there. Every day they discovered new treasures, like the navigators who first set foot in America: they wandered with ever fresh delights over this mysterious and virgin land. They never asked themselves if he were rich or poor; they were satisfied to know that he was good; and nothing they might find could be more precious to them than that heart of gold. On his side, François was inspired with his metamorphosis. Has any one ever told you how spring breaks upon the gardens in Russia? Yesterday the snow covered everything: to-day comes a ray of sunshine which puts winter to flight. At noon the trees burst their buds: by night they are covered with leaves: to-morrow they almost bear fruit. So did François' love bloom and bear its freight of promise. His coldness and constraint were carried away like icicles in a thaw; the shamefaced and pusillanimous boy in a few weeks became a man. I do not know

who first uttered the word *marriage*, but what difference does it make? The word is always understood when two true hearts speak of love.

François was of age and his own master, but his beloved depended upon a father whose consent it was necessary to obtain. There the unfortunate youth's timidity mastered him again. It was well enough for Claire to say to him: "Write unhesitatingly; my father is already notified: you will receive his consent by return mail." He wrote and re-wrote this letter over a hundred times, without being able to make up his mind to send it. Nevertheless, it was an easy task, and the most ordinary intelligence would have performed it with credit. François knew the name, position, fortune, and even the temperament of his future father-in-law. They had let him into all the domestic secrets; he was almost one of the family. What was left for him to do? To state, in a few words, what he was and what he had; the reply was not doubtful. He hesitated so long, that at the end of a month Claire and her mother were forced to entertain misgivings regarding him. I think they would have still been patient for a fortnight longer, but the paternal wisdom did not permit it. If Claire was in love, if her lover had not decided to make a formal declaration of his intentions, the thing to do was, without losing any time, to get the girl in a safe place in Paris. Possibly then M. François Thomas would make

up his mind to ask her in marriage: he knew where to find her.

One day when François went to take the ladies out walking, the hotel-keeper told him that they had left for Paris. Their rooms were already occupied by an English family. Such a rude blow, falling suddenly upon such a delicate head, destroyed his reason. He went out like an idiot, and began looking for Claire in all the places where he had been used to taking her. He went to his lodgings with a violent pain in his head, which he treated, God only knows how. He had himself bled, took boiling hot baths, applied ferocious sinapisms, and, in short, revenged on his body the tortures of his soul. When he considered himself cured, he started for France, resolved to apply for Claire's hand before changing his coat. He hurried to Paris, sprang from the car, forgot his baggage, jumped into a cab, and cried to the driver:

"To *her*! Gallop!"

"Where to, boss?"

"To Monsieur ———, Rue ———, I don't know any more." He had forgotten the name and address of the woman he loved. "Go ahead to my house; I'll find it again." He gave the coachman his card and was taken home.

His concierge was a childless old man named Emmanuel. On meeting him, François bowed low and said:

"Monsieur, you have a daughter, Mlle. Claire Emmanuel. I wanted to write you to ask for her hand; but I thought it would be better to make the request in person."

They realized that he was crazy, and ran to the Faubourg St. Antoine to find his Uncle Marlot.

Uncle Marlot was the most honest man in the Rue de Charonne, which is one of the longest streets in Paris. He made antique furniture with ordinary skill and extraordinary conscientiousness. It was not his way to represent stained pear-wood as ebony, or a cabinet of his own make as a mediæval piece! Nevertheless, he knew as well as anybody the art of cracking new wood and making it appear full of worm-holes of which worms were entirely innocent. But it was his principle and his law to wrong nobody. With a moderation almost absurd in the manufacture of articles of luxury, he limited his profits to five per cent. over and above the general expenses of his establishment; consequently he had gained more respect than money. When he made out a bill, he went over the addition three times, so fearful was he of misleading somebody to his own advantage.

After thirty years of this business, he was just about as rich as when he left his apprenticeship. He had made his living like the humblest of his employees, and he asked himself, with a touch of jealousy, how M. Thomas had managed to lay up

money. His brother-in-law looked down on him a little, with the vanity natural to parvenus, but he looked down upon his brother-in-law more effectually, with the pride of a man who never cared to become a parvenu. He made a parade of his mediocrity, and said with plebeian self-conceit, "At least I'm sure that I've nothing that belongs to anybody else."

Man is a strange animal: I am not the first who has said so. This excellent M. Marlot, whose super-scrupulous honesty amused the whole faubourg, felt an agreeable tickling at the bottom of his heart, when they came to tell him of his nephew's disorder. He heard an insinuating little voice saying to him, very low, "If François is insane, you'll be his guardian." Probity hastened to reply: "We won't be any richer."—"How?" answered the voice: "Certainly an insane man's board never costs thirty thousand francs a year. Moreover, we shall have all the trouble; we'll have to neglect our business; we deserve more compensation; we won't wrong anybody."—"But," replied Disinterestedness, "one ought to help his relations without charging them for it."—"Certainly," murmured the voice.—"Then why did n't our family ever do anything for us?"—"Bah!" responded the goodness of his heart. "This won't amount to anything, anyway; it's only a false alarm. François will be well in a couple of

days.”—“Possibly, however,” continued the obstinate voice, “the malady will kill the patient, and we’ll inherit without wronging anybody. We’ve worked thirty years for the sovereign who reigns at Potsdam; who knows but what a blow on a cracked head may make our fortune?”

The good man stopped his ears; but his ears were so large, so ample, so nobly expanded, like a conch-shell, that the subtle and persevering little voice always slipped into them in spite of him. The factory in the Rue de Charonne was left to the care of the foreman, and the uncle established his winter-quarters in his nephew’s pretty rooms. He slept in a good bed, and liked it. He sat at an excellent table, and the cramps in the stomach which he had complained of for many years were cured by magic. He was waited upon, dressed, and shaved by Germain, and he got used to it. Little by little he consoled himself for seeing his nephew sick. He fell into the habit of thinking that perhaps François never would get well; nevertheless, he repeated to himself now and then, to keep his conscience easy, “I’m not injuring anybody.”

At the end of three months, he got tired of having a crazy man in the house, for he began to feel as if he were at home there himself. François’s perpetual drivelling, and his maria for asking Claire in marriage, came to be an intolerable burden to the old man; he resolved to

clear the house and shut the sick man up at M. Auvray's. "After all," he said to himself, "my nephew will get better care there, and I shall be more at ease. Science has recognized that it is well to give the insane change of scene to divert them : I 'm doing my duty."

With such thoughts as these he went to sleep, when François took it into his head to tie his hands; what an awakening!

III.

THE doctor came in with apologies for keeping them waiting. François got up, put his hat on the table, and explained matters with great volubility, while striding up and down the room.

"Monsieur," said he, "this is my maternal uncle, whom I am about to confide to your care. You see in him a man of from forty-five to fifty, hardened to manual labor and the privations of a life of hard work; as to the rest, born of healthy parents, in a family where no case of mental aberration has ever been known. You will not, then, have to contend against an hereditary disorder. His trouble is one of the most curious monomanias which you ever had occasion to examine. He passes with inconceivable rapidity from extreme gayety to extreme depression; it is a singular compound of monomania proper and melancholy."

"He has not entirely lost his reason?"

"No, monsieur, he's not absolutely demented; he's unsound on but one point, so he comes entirely within your specialty."

"What's the characteristic of his malady?"

"Alas, monsieur, the characteristic of our times—cupidity. The poor fellow is certainly the man of the period. After working from childhood, he finds himself poor. My father, starting where he did, left me considerable property. My uncle began by being jealous; then realizing that he was my only relative, and would be my heir in case of death, or my guardian in case of insanity, as a weak mind easily believes what it desires, the unhappy man persuaded himself that I had lost my reason. He has told everybody so: will say the same to you. In the carriage, although his own hands were bound, he thought that it was he who was bringing me to you."

"When was the first attack?"

"About three months ago. He went down and said to my concierge, with a frightened air: 'Monsieur Emmanuel, you have a daughter; leave her in your lodge, and come and help me bind my nephew.'"

"Does he realize his condition? Does he know that he is not himself?"

"No, monsieur, and I think that's a good sign. I'll tell you, moreover, that he has some remark-

able derangements of the vital functions, and especially of nutrition. He has entirely lost appetite, and is subject to long periods of sleeplessness."

"So much the better. A deranged person who sleeps and eats regularly is almost incurable. Let me wake him up."

M. Auvray gently shook the shoulder of the sleeper, who sprang to his feet. His first movement was to rub his eyes. When he found his hands bound, he realized what had happened while he slept, and burst out laughing.

"That's a good joke!" he said.

François drew the doctor aside.

"You see. Well, in five minutes he will be raving."

"Leave him to me. I know how to take them." He approached his patient smiling as one does upon a child whom he wishes to amuse. "My friend," he said, "you woke up at the right time. Did you have pleasant dreams?"

"I? I've not been dreaming. I laughed at seeing myself tied up like a bundle of sticks. People would take me for the crazy one."

"There!" said François.

"Have the kindness to let me loose, doctor. I can explain matters better when I'm free."

"My child, I'm going to untie you; but you must promise to be very good."

"Why, monsieur, do you really take me for a madman?"

"No, my friend, but you're not well. We'll take care of you and cure you. Hold still. Now your hands are free. Don't abuse it."

"Why, what the devil do you suppose I'll do? I've brought you my nephew—"

"Very well," said M. Auvray, "we'll talk about that in good time. I found you asleep; do you often sleep in the daytime?"

"Never! This stupid book—"

"Oh! oh!" said the author, "the case is serious. And so you think your nephew is mad?"

"Mad enough to be tied up, monsieur; and the proof is, that I had fastened his hands together with this rope."

"But you're the one whose hands were tied. Don't you remember that I set you free?"

"It was I? It was he! But let me explain the whole affair."

"Tut, my friend, you're getting excited: you're very red in the face. I don't want you to tire yourself. Just be content to answer my questions. You say that your nephew is ill?"

"Crazy, crazy, crazy!"

"And you are satisfied to see him crazy?"

"I?"

"Answer me frankly. You're not anxious for him to get well: is n't that so?"

"Why?"

"So that his fortune can remain in your hands. You want to be rich. You don't like having worked so long without making a fortune. You think it's your turn now?"

M. Morlot did not answer. He kept his eyes fixed on the floor. He asked himself if he were not having a bad dream, and tried to make out what was real in this experience of pinioned hands, cross-examinations, and questions from a stranger who read his conscience like an open book.

"Does he hear voices?" asked M. Auvray.

The poor uncle felt his hair stand on end. He remembered that persistent little voice which kept whispering in his ear, and he answered mechanically: "Sometimes."

"Ah! he has hallucinations?"

"No, no! I'm not ill; let me go. I'll lose my senses here. Ask all my friends; they'll tell you that I'm in full possession of my faculties. Feel my pulse; you'll see that I've no fever."

"Poor uncle!" said François. "He does n't know that insanity is madness without fever."

"Monsieur," added the doctor, "if we could only give our patients fever, we'd cure them all."

M. Morlot threw himself on the sofa; his nephew continued to pace the doctor's study.

"Monsieur," said François, "I am deeply afflicted by my uncle's misfortune, but it is a great consolation to be able to entrust him to

such a man as yourself. I have read your admirable book on *La Monomanie raisonnée*; it is the most remarkable book that has been written on the subject since the *Traité des Maladies mentales*, by the great Esquirol. I know, moreover, that you are a father to your patients, so I will not insult you by recommending M. Morlot to special care. As to the expense of his treatment, I leave that entirely to you." He took a thousand-franc note from his pocket-book, and quietly laid it on the mantel. "I shall have the honor to present myself here in the course of next week. At what hour is access to the patients allowed?"

"From noon till two o'clock. As for me, I'm always at home. Good-day, monsieur."

"Stop him!" cried the poor uncle. "Don't let him go! He's the crazy one; I'll explain his madness!"

"Pray calm yourself, my dear uncle," said François, going out; "I leave you in M. Auvray's hands; he'll take good care of you."

M. Morlot tried to follow his nephew. The doctor held him back.

"What awful luck!" cried the poor uncle. "He won't say a single crazy thing! If he would only lose his bearings a little, you'd see well enough that it's not I who am crazy."

François already had hold of the door-knob. He turned on his heel, as if he had forgotten

something: marched straight up to the doctor, and said to him:

"Monsieur, my uncle's illness is not the only motive which brought me here."

"Ah! ah!" murmured M. Morlot, who thought he saw a ray of hope.

The young man continued:

"You have a daughter."

"At last!" cried the poor uncle. "You'll bear witness that he said, 'You have a daughter!'"

The doctor replied to François: "Yes, Monsieur. Explain—"

"You have a daughter, Mlle. Claire Auvray."

"There it is! There it is! I told you that very thing!"

"Yes, monsieur," said the doctor.

"Three months since, she was at the Ems Springs with her mother."

"Bravo! bravo!" yelled M. Morlot.

"Yes, monsieur," responded the doctor.

M. Morlot ran up to the doctor and said: "You're not the doctor! You're one of the patients!"

"My friend," replied the doctor, "if you don't behave yourself, we'll have to give you a shower-bath."

M. Morlot recoiled, frightened. His nephew continued:

"Monsieur, I love Mademoiselle—your daughter. I have some hope that I'm loved in return,

and if her sentiments have not changed since September, I have the honor to ask you for her hand."

The doctor answered: "This is Monsieur François Thomas, then, with whom I've the honor of speaking?"

"The same, monsieur, and I ought to have begun by telling you my name."

"Monsieur, permit me to tell you that you've decidedly taken your own time."

At this moment, the doctor's attention was drawn to M. Morlot, who was rubbing his hands with a sort of passion.

"What's the matter with you, my friend?" he inquired in his sweet and paternal voice.

"Nothing! Nothing! I'm only rubbing my hands."

"But why?"

"There's something there that bothers me."

"Show it to me; I don't see anything."

"You don't see it? There, there, between the fingers. I see it plainly, I do!"

"What do you see?"

"My nephew's money. Take it away, doctor! I'm an honest man; I don't want anybody's property."

While the doctor was listening attentively to these first aberrations of M. Morlot a strange revolution took place in the appearance of François. He grew pale and cold, his teeth chattered

violently. M. Auvray turned towards him, to ask what had happened.

"Nothing," he replied. "She's coming. I hear her. This is joy . . . but it overcomes me. Happiness falls upon me like snow. The winter will be hard for lovers. Doctor, see what's going on in my head."

M. Morlot ran to him, saying :

"Enough ! Don't be crazy any more ! I no longer want you to be an idiot. People will say that I stole your wits. I'm honest, doctor ; look at my hands ; search my pockets ; send to my house, Rue de Charonne, in the Faubourg St. Antoine ; open all the drawers ; you'll see that I've nothing that belongs to anybody else."

The doctor stood much perplexed between his two patients, when a door opened, and Claire came in to tell her father that breakfast was waiting.

François jumped up as if propelled by a spring, but only his wishes reached Mlle. Auvray. His body fell heavily on the sofa. He could scarcely murmur a few words.

"Claire ! It is I. I love you. Will you ? . . ."

He passed his hand over his brow. His pale face flushed violently. The temples throbbed fiercely, and he felt a heavy oppression over his eyelids. Claire, as near dead as alive, caught up his two hands. His skin was dry, and his pulse so hard that the poor girl was terrified. It was

not thus that she had hoped to see him again. In a few minutes a yellowish tinge spread about his nostrils; then came nausea, and M. Auvray recognized all the symptoms of a bilious fever. "What a misfortune," he said, "that this fever did n't come to his uncle; it would have cured him!"

He pulled the bell. The maid-servant ran in, and then Mme. Auvray, whom François scarcely recognized, so much was he overcome. The sick man had to be put to bed, and that without delay. Claire offered her chamber and her bed. It was a pretty little couch with white curtains; a tiny chamber and chastely attractive, upholstered in pink percale, and blooming with great bunches of heather, in azure vases. On the mantel appeared a large onyx cup. This was the only present which Claire had received from her lover! If you are taken with fever, dear reader, I wish you such a sick-room.

While they were giving the first cares to François, his uncle, beside himself, flurried around the chamber, getting into the doctor's way, embracing the patient, seizing Mme. Auvray's hand, and crying in ear-splitting tones: "Cure him quick, quick! I don't want him to die; I won't permit his death; I've a right to oppose it; I'm his uncle and his guardian! If you don't cure him, they'll say I killed him. I want you all to bear witness that I don't claim to be his heir.

I'll give all his property to the poor. A glass of water, please, to wash my hands with."

They had to take him into the sick-wards of the establishment. There he raved so, that they had to put him in a strong canvas waistcoat laced up behind, with the sleeves sewed together at the ends: that is what they call a strait-jacket. The nurses took care of him.

Mme. Auvray and her daughter took devoted care of François, although the details of the treatment were not always the most agreeable; but the more delicate sex takes naturally to heroism. You may say that the two ladies saw in their patient a son-in-law and a husband. But I think that if he had been a stranger, he would have scarcely lost anything. St. Vincent de Paul invented only a uniform, for in every woman, of any rank, or any age, exists the essential material of a sister of charity.

Seated night and day in this chamber, filled with fever, mother and daughter employed their moments of repose in telling over their souvenirs and their hopes. They could not explain François' long silence, his sudden return, or the circumstances that had led him to the Avenue Montaigne. If he loved Claire, why had he forced himself to wait three months? Did he need his uncle's illness to bring him to M. Auvray's? If his love had worn out, why did he not take his uncle to some other doctor? There are enough

of them in Paris. Possibly he had thought his passion cured until Claire's presence had undeceived him ! But no, for before seeing her, he had asked her in marriage.

All these questions were answered by François in his delirium. Claire, hanging on his lips; eagerly took in his lightest words; she talked them over with her mother and the doctor, who was not long in getting at the truth. To a man accustomed to disentangle the most confused ideas, and to read the minds of the insane like a partly obliterated page, the wanderings of fever are an intelligible language, and the most confused delirium is not without its lights. They soon knew that he had lost his reason, and under what circumstances, and they even made out how he had been the innocent cause of his uncle's malady.

Then began a new series of misgivings for Mlle. Auvray. François had been insane. Would the terrible crisis which she had unwittingly brought on cure him ? The doctor assured her that fever had the privilege of indicating the exact nature of mental disturbance : that is to say, of curing it. Nevertheless, there is no rule without exceptions, especially in medicine. Suppose he were to get well, would there be no fear of relapses ? Would M. Auvray give his daughter to one of his patients ?

"As for me," said Claire, sadly smiling, "I'm

not afraid of anything: I would risk it. I'm the cause of his sufferings; ought not I to console him? After all, his insanity is restricted to asking for my hand: he'll have no more occasion to ask it when I'm his wife; then we'll not have anything to fear. The poor child is sick only from excess of love; cure it, dear father, but not too thoroughly. I want him always to be mad enough to love me as I love him."

"We'll see," responded M. Auvray. "Wait till the fever is past. If he's ashamed of having been ill, if I find him sad or melancholy when he gets well, I can't answer for anything. If, on the other hand, he looks back upon his disorder without shame or regret, if he speaks of it resignedly, if he meets the people who have been taking care of him without repugnance, I can laugh at the idea of relapses."

"Ah, father, why should he be ashamed of having loved to excess? It is a noble and generous madness which never enters petty souls. And how can he feel repugnance on meeting those who have nursed him? For they are we!"

After six days of delirium, an abundant perspiration carried off the fever, and the patient began to convalesce. When he found himself in a strange room, between Mme. and Mlle. Auvray, his first idea was that he was still at the hotel of the Quatre Saisons, in the principal street of Ems. His feebleness, his emaciation, and the presence

of the doctor, led him to other thoughts; he had his memory, but vaguely. The doctor came to his aid. He opened the truth to him cautiously, as they measure out food for a body enfeebled by fasting. François commenced by listening to his own story as to a romance in which he had not played any part; he was another man, an entirely new man, and he came out of the fever as out of a tomb. Little by little the gaps in his memory closed up. His brain seemed full of empty places, which filled up one by one without any sudden jars. Very soon he was quite master of himself, and fully conscious of the past. The cure was a work of science, but, above all, of patience. It is in such particulars that the paternal treatment of M. Auvray is so much admired. That excellent man had a genius for gentleness. On the 25th of December, François, seated on the side of his bed, and ballasted with some chicken-soup and half the yolk of an egg, told, without any interruption, trouble, or wandering, without any feeling of shame or regret, and without any other emotion than a tranquil joy, the occurrences of the three months which had just passed. Claire and Mme. Auvray wept while they listened. The doctor acted as if he were taking notes or writing from dictation, but something else than ink fell upon the paper. When the tale was told, the convalescent added, by way of conclusion:

"To-day, the 25th of December, at three o'clock in the afternoon, I said to my excellent doctor, to my beloved father, M. Auvray, whose street and number I shall never forget again, 'Monsieur, you have a daughter, Mlle. Claire Auvray; I saw her last summer at the Ems Springs with her mother; I love her; she has given me abundant proof that she loves me, and if you are not afraid that I will get sick again, I have the honor to ask you for her hand.'"

The doctor only made a little motion of the head, but Claire passed her arm around the convalescent's neck, and kissed him on the forehead. I care for no other reply when I make a similar demand.

The same day, M. Morlot, calmer and freed from the strait-jacket, got up at eight in the morning. On getting out of bed, he took his slippers, turned them over and over, shook them carefully, and passed them to the nurse, begging him to see if they did not contain thirty thousand francs income. Not till then would he consent to put them on. He combed himself for a good quarter of an hour, repeating, "I don't want anybody to say that my nephew's fortune has got into my head." He shook each of his garments out of the window, after examining it down to its smallest wrinkle. As soon as he was dressed, he asked for a pencil, and wrote on the walls of his chamber :

“COVET NOT THAT WHICH IS ANOTHER’S.”

Then he commenced to rub his hands with incredible energy, to satisfy himself that François’ fortune was not sticking to them. He scraped his fingers with his pencil, counting them from one up to ten, for fear that he should forget one. He thought he was in a police court, and earnestly demanded to be searched. The doctor got him to recognize him, and told him that François was cured. The poor man asked if the money had been found. “As my nephew is going to leave here,” he said, “he’ll need his money; where is it? I haven’t got it, unless it’s in my bed.” And before any one had time to prevent him, he pulled his bed topsy-turvy. The doctor went out after pressing his hand. He rubbed this hand with scrupulous care. They brought him his breakfast; he commenced by examining his napkin, his glass, his knife, his plate, repeating that he did not want to eat up his nephew’s fortune. The repast over, he washed his hands in enormous quantities of water. “The fork is silver,” said he; “perhaps there’s some silver sticking to my hands!”

M. Auvray does not despair of saving him, but it will take time. Summer and Autumn are the seasons in which doctors are most successful with insanity.

ANOTHER GAMBLER

BY

PAUL BOURGET

From "Pastels of Men," translated by Miss Katherine
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ANOTHER GAMBLER

A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

BY PAUL BOURGET

“**T**HOUGH he was your cousin,” I said to Claude after reading a telegram which he handed to me, “you surely cannot grieve for his death. He has done justice on himself; and I did not expect it of him. His suicide spares your old uncle the scandal of a shocking trial. But what a history! That old woman murdered merely for the sake of her trumpery savings! To come to such an end, through degradation after degradation—he whom we once knew so proud, so elegant! I see him now when he first arrived in our old provincial town, just after he had been appointed lieutenant of artillery. We followed him in the streets with such boyish pride. He was twenty-seven, and you and I were not a third of his age. Ah, well, in spite of all—poor, poor Lucien!”

“Fate is often very strange,” said my companion. As he said these words in a serious tone, which relieved them of all triteness, he was poking the fire and gazing into it—at what? It was the 24th of December. We had planned to go to the theatre and then to sup together at a

restaurant on the boulevard. I had come with that intention, and yet, here we were talking over painful things instead of going out. The silence of the wintry night was absolute around that old Hôtel Sainte-Euverte, the right wing of which my friend inhabited alone. "Yes, very strange," he repeated; "and it is one of those coincidences which make me believe in occult causes that I should hear of this death to-day, Christmas Eve, and"—here he looked at the clock—"at this particular hour. What should you think," he continued, "if I were to tell you that at certain moments a sort of hallucination overcomes me and seems to place the responsibility for Lucien's conduct on me. The most inexplicable of all chances mixed me up in a very mysterious, almost fantastic manner (that was nevertheless very direct) with the first great fault of my cousin's life; I mean that dishonesty at cards in the Desaix Club at Clermont, in consequence of which he was forced to send in his resignation and leave the town. You know the rest, and how he has gone on since then."

"Yes, I remember it all," I replied. "Your uncle's hair turned white in a very short time after it happened. When we met on the avenue that winter you used to make me avoid him, for fear I should look into his eyes and see how sad they were. He always left his house the back way, by the street that runs near the wall

of the building where they manufacture those aerated waters. I should like to know if the little boys of the present day still play as we did in that brook, and find bits of colored glass in it. What lots of such glass you and I picked up when your nurse Miette and my nurse Mion sat talking on a bench that was three trees off."

"If I could not bear the sadness of my old uncle's eyes," continued Claude, "it was for stronger reasons than you have ever suspected. Ah! I'm talking about old, old matters. I have often felt tempted to tell you about them, but I have never dared." Then, as my face expressed, no doubt, a keen, though silent curiosity, he leaned his elbow on the arm of his chair and his forehead on his hand, covering his eyes, in the attitude of one who is striving to recall the past. "Do you remember," he said at last, "the little shop of old Père Commolet, the toy-seller?"

"Behind the cathedral, at the further end of the Rue des Notaires; you turn to the left into a long, narrow alley darkened by Gothic arches. We used to call it Cold Street. Gargoyles were overhead, with other hideous sculptures. On rainy days it was one long cascade, and when the wind blew how it did send you round the corner by the church!"

"Yes, but don't you remember how old Commolet's shop window brightened that gloomy place for all the children in town? A never-

failing spring of temptation gushed from that shop. Behind its windows, always dirty, were ideal shepherdesses, herds of cattle, flocks of sheep of all colors ranged on grass-green meadows, fortresses defended by foot-soldiers that were *round*, whereas the tin soldiers of other dealers were flat. The horsemen against whom the foot-soldiers fought could be dismounted from their horses, and this simple matter made them as living, to us, as real cuirassiers and real dragoons. Then there were those boats with cabins and hatchways, and others that went by steam, with microscopic cannon which could be charged with real powder. As for me, the almost imperceptible hole bored in the breech of those guns by which to fire the charge took possession of my mind, and pursued me with the fascination of an eye. Try to remember it all as I do,—Commolet walking up and down among those enchanting things in that supernatural paradise, wearing his yellowish woollen cap with ear-pads, which never left his head. This spare individual with a steel-gray face, an interminable nose, and pale blue eyes, seemed to me a big toy himself, some queer and complicated mechanism placed among the others. You must surely remember how, when we could persuade our nurses to return from our walks along this dingy street (which is now pulled down), our hearts beat when the church came in sight above the roofs of the houses. But

the year of which I am going to speak,—it was 1861, the year in which you were sent away to school,—I used to come this way alone as I returned from the lyceum, and among the bewitching things in those shop windows was a certain object which obliterated for me all the rest,—namely, a copper-gilt sabre. To my eyes that sabre literally filled Cold Street with sunshine. You can readily imagine that I became possessed by a frantic desire to possess it, for you know the fervor of my imagination and the feverish condition in which I lived up to my fifteenth year. The gold of that scabbard irradiated for me the gloomy lane; it bathed with effulgent beams the gray tints of the old stone buildings. The hilt was inlaid with mother-of-pearl, the sword-belt was of red leather. To buckle that belt around my waist, to clasp that hilt, to draw that blade from its damascened sheath, became to my nine-year-old brain one of those dreams of infinite felicity so frantically cherished that they seem to our minds impossible of attainment. Alas, that golden sabre cost twenty-four francs. My sister Blanche, who often gave me books, knowing my desire for it, said to me: ‘If you can lay by ten francs I will give you the rest.’ To save ten francs out of my poor little schoolboy allowance—you know if I could! My only chance was that at Christmas my uncle might give me, as he had done before, a little money; but even then I was

always told it was to be spent for books. My hopes were therefore very slight; but this increased rather than diminished the eagerness of my desire."

"Don't I know you, my poor Claude?" I interrupted. "I never heard the story of the sabre, but I once saw you desperately in love (I can't use any other term) with the horrible little diadem of some madonna blazing with mock jewels in the shop of a vendor of church furniture. You longed to crown Aline Verrier with it—that pretty, fair-haired Aline, who used to play spillikins with us at your sister's when I went there to lunch."

"Was it as horrible as all that?" he cried, shaking his head. "I see it even now, quite as beautiful as that diadem of Queen Constance which they show us in the treasury at Palermo. However, as you have not forgotten the fury of my fancies, you will the better understand the moral drama which was enacted within my soul on that Christmas evening, now twenty years ago. My sister Blanche was ill, as usual; her headache had been so severe during the day that she was forced to go to bed. My brother-in-law, foreseeing the approaching catastrophe, did not leave her bedside, and they both consented that I should go and dine with my uncle. She did not understand, my poor dear sister, that her sick-room, so warm and quiet, was

the place I liked best in the world. You know how good she was to me after the death of my father and mother. If she had lived I should have been a different man ! That room of hers looked out, as you know, on the Place d'Armes. From the windows could be seen the statue of a marshal of the First Empire, in full dress, with his arm extended as though giving an order. Having no friend but you,—and you could not come to me then for fear of disturbing my sister,—this room, which was hung in blue, and where I played alone and silently for hours, was often filled with life and metamorphosed by my fancy. The furniture became persons, to whom I gave gestures, intentions, acts. One of the chairs was you, another Aline ; together we played imaginary games while Blanche read, lying on her couch beside the fire, with her poor consumptive face, that was only twenty-five years old. She was my elder by sixteen years. Through the closed windows I could hear the cries of the street boys, playing around the statue of the famous soldier. I was not very fond of going out, and yet, on this occasion, the idea of dining with my Uncle Gaspard pleased me. A secret hope possessed my soul that he would give me a gold-piece, the color of the sabre that lay glittering in the well-known window, the very image of which would often force me to close my eyes. Well, I went to my uncle's. You remember the dining-room

with its sideboard and the other furniture in carved wood? My uncle presided, very tall and thin, with that finely shaped brow of his beneath a head of hair that was still black; on his little finger was a large emerald which we greatly envied him, and he wore a brown surtout coat. When I stooped (I was sitting beside him) to pick up my fork, I could see his arched feet in those famous boots he always wore,—a habit to which he declared he owed his complete exemption from colds and other aches and pains. My Aunt Laure sat opposite to him, with her black mittens and her two gray curls which depended from a cap with lilac ribbons down the whole length of that wrinkled, faded, weary face of hers, which was lighted by a pair of the softest black eyes. There was also present Monsieur Optat Viple, former inspector, who is represented in our family albums by a photograph in which he is looking at a flower stuck in his hat. He colored the flower himself with red in your family album, with blue in mine; the flower is the same,—a circumstance which caused us a puzzled amazement that never lessened. The other guests were Madame Alexis, Greslou the engineer, Captain Hippolyte Morin, old Monsieur Largeyx, Mademoiselle Elisa, and my other aunt Claudia, who had come from Saint-Saturnin for the holidays. She is the only one of those present except Uncle Gaspard and myself who is still

living. My Cousin Lucien was there, of course; and he behaved very oddly during dinner, sometimes laughing and drinking hilariously, and then becoming taciturn. Though he was not in uniform his martial face bespoke the soldier. Since then, and looking back from a distance, I can see that something ambiguous floated in those brown eyes of his, and gathered at the corners of his mouth, which dropped a trifle, revealing a tendency to debauchery. You will understand presently why the chief topic of conversation has always remained in my memory. I was the only child at table, and too young for my elders to take notice whether I understood their talk or not. They spoke of presentiments, and so on to superstitions, apropos of the statue of the marshal in the Place d'Armes opposite to my sister's house. They told how at Eylau, and before he rode his cavalry to the charge, that brave man twice recoiled, as though he had seen death face to face. He struck his horse with whip and spur, saying to the nearest officer, 'I am like my poor Desaix,—I feel that the bullets won't respect me any longer.' Five minutes later he fell, shot through the breast. This anecdote served as the nucleus for twenty others. Madame Alexis related that after she had dreamed she saw the postman enter and give her a mourning letter, the letter did actually come and was given to her the following morning under the identical circum-

stances of her dream. Captain Morin had distinctly heard the voice of a friend calling to him; at that very hour the friend, of whose illness he knew nothing, died. Monsieur Largeyx was about to start on a journey, when his wife implored him not to go; and that entreaty probably saved his life, for an accident happened to the train he would otherwise have taken. Such tales are constantly repeated in conversations of this kind; they are all alike,—asserted in good faith and quite impossible to verify, so easily does our love for the marvellous strangle our memory. My uncle and Monsieur Viple listened to these tales with a smile of incredulity which you can well imagine,—worthy old devils that they were, born under the Emperor, and trained to the philosophy of the eighteenth century. They had attended Dupuytren's clinics in their youth, and they usually replied, with a glance at each other, when the supernatural was talked of, that 'they had never seen it dissected.' On this occasion they were, as usual, incredulous and ironical, winking their eyes, however, and nodding their heads to induce their guests to talk on. 'How is it with you, Lucien?' said Monsieur Viple. 'With me?' said the young man, 'well, I have my superstitions, though I never dissected them; I have been in battle, and I believe in presentiments; I have played cards and seen others play, and I believe in fetiches.'"

"Can you swear he was wrong," I exclaimed, laughing,—“you who could not play a hand at baccarat if Jacques Molan looked at you?”

"What do we really know of what we are pleased to call chance?" said Claude. "But at that time it was not the idea that struck my mind, it was the word. In those days all unknown terms, or words I could only half understand, fairly bewitched me. What a shudder ran through me when I heard those mysterious syllables, 'fetich'; I could n't express the feeling even now to any one but you. From other remarks of my cousin, I guessed—as far as a child was capable of guessing—the meaning of the word, and I amused myself by repeating it, 'Fetich!' As soon as we returned to the salon after dinner, I seated myself as usual on that little low chair which you were so fond of, on the back of which is carved the fable of the Fox and the Stork. Mr. Fox, crouching down with his nose in the air, is looking at Madame Stork as she runs her long throat down the narrow neck of the bottle. Every part of the room, lighted on this occasion by four tall lamps, was in keeping with the countenances of the persons assembled there, who were discussing the same subjects and sitting on the same furniture (of the purest style of the Empire) as in the days of my grandfather, the old notary and Voltairean. His portrait, hanging on the wall, bore a most extraordinary likeness to

my uncle. "He was a good man, but a heathen," my aunt often said to me,—another word which set me dreaming. My uncle was born to him when he was quite young; my father when he was old. I reflected that he must have known the marshal in person, and as my head grew heavy with sleep the talk going on about me seemed strangely mingled with what I knew of that old grandfather and his enigmatical portrait. All this, however, did not prevent me from being extremely anxious about the present which I fondly hoped my uncle would make me. So when I was told, about nine o'clock, that my nurse had come for me, it was with a beating heart that I offered my cheek to be kissed by all the old people present before I reached Uncle Gaspard, who then proceeded to draw from his pocket a little book wrapped in tissue paper. 'Open it when you get home,' he said. It was that delightful book on butterflies, with colored illustrations, which gave you and me so many excuses for torturing the poor insects by comparing them with the plates. But when I received the gift my disappointment, though I said, 'Thank you,' was bitter. Ah! how much better I should have liked some money to increase the little sum laid by in my savings' box, which was just like yours,—a stone apple painted green, which I shook daily for the pleasure of hearing the big sous rattle. My dream of the golden sabre lay buried in that

box, and there, alas! I had to leave it. But how shall I tell you what I felt when my Cousin Lucien said to me, 'I have a present for you, too. Come into my bedroom.' I followed him. Taking two coins from his purse, one white and one yellow, he said, showing me the silver one, which was two francs, 'This is for you; and this other,' he added, holding up the yellow one, which was worth ten francs—my ten francs! 'look at it well; that is to be my fetich. I must have a run of luck to-night, do you hear me? You are to give that to the first beggar you meet after you leave the house. Don't fail, or you will bring me ill-luck.' I still hear those words across the intervening years, though they were half incomprehensible to me then. I took the two coins in my hand, which was covered with a thick knitted mitten, and I promised my cousin to do his commission faithfully. He then turned me over to my nurse Miette, who was waiting at the foot of the great staircase, with a brown hood on her head, goloshes on her feet, and a lantern in her hand."

"That's truly characteristic of a gambler," I interrupted; "it is like Italy, where on Saturdays they put a small boy, dressed in white for the occasion, to draw the numbers of the lottery."

"A good deal of snow had fallen the night before," continued Claude, paying no attention to my remark, "so that in order not to slip we had

to walk very slowly through the silent streets. Miette held me by the left hand, and with the fingers of my right I clasped the bits of money tightly and felt that one was larger than the other. The shops were nearly all shut, but in most of the windows lights were still burning. To reach home we had to turn an angle of the cathedral and pass before the very shop,—the shop of old Commolet. My nurse, whom we called the Ant (don't you remember you named her because you saw a likeness in her to that industrious insect?)—well, she never talked, and I was looking about at that queer corner of the old town which seemed just then very weird. The graceful butresses of the church stood darkly forth against their covering of snow. The heavens sparkled with stars, and Commolet's shop was close by. The image of that sabre flamed suddenly before my eyes with more intensity than ever, and I reflected that it might be mine if that bit, that little bit of gold, which I felt in my hand, belonged to me. Hardly had the two ideas entered my mind before they welded themselves together. 'If that bit of gold belonged to me? But, if I choose, it will belong to me. What hinders me from giving, not this bit but the other bit to a beggar? Who will see me do it? Besides, if I had told my desire to my cousin he would have given the ten francs to me; he is so kind and good.'—I had reached this

stage in my reflections when we passed beneath the windows of the club to which my cousin belonged when he lived at home. I had heard my sister on one occasion call it a 'hell.' The word came back to my mind, and with it a sudden vision of hell such as Abbé Martel, you remember, used to describe in a way to make our flesh creep. 'If I take those ten francs,' I said to myself suddenly, 'it is stealing; and to steal is a mortal sin.' I saw myself damned. 'I'll give the ten francs to the first beggar,' I thought. 'But suppose we don't meet any?' Not one had I seen since we left my uncle's house. 'Well, if I don't meet one, I shall tell my cousin to-morrow, and I know he won't take the money back.' I reasoned thus, but I knew very well that I was telling myself a lie. We had to pass before the portico of the Capucin chapel. It was the regular rendezvous of beggars, and on Christmas eve they were sure to be there, waiting for the faithful who attended the midnight mass. It was one of the corners of the old town which we knew the best, for old Mother Giraud kept a stall there, where she sold apples in the autumn, barley-sugar in winter, and cherries, tied by a thread to a little stick, in spring. The angle of the portico served as a niche for a blind man, in whose withered face were two white eyes half covered by lids suffused with blood. Can't you see him now,—moving his head about and

standing up straight in his blue blouse? In one hand he held a rusty chain fastened to the collar of a dirty white dog, and with the other he extended to the passers-by, as a kind of alms-basin, the headpiece of a black felt hat, the brim of which was missing. We had no sooner reached the chapel than I heard his whine: 'Charity, good people, charity.' The sound had scarcely reached my ears before the temptation to take that piece of gold came back to me, and this time it was irresistible. No other idea had time to enter my mind and drive away the thought which made me, almost mechanically, let go of my nurse's hand and deposit in the blind man's hat—"

"The silver coin?" I said as he hesitated.

"Yes," he replied, sighing, "the silver coin. The Capucin chapel was passed, and we had gone the whole length of the pavement in the Place du Taureau and had turned the corner by the hospital. We were close at home. A strange calm had succeeded my first agitation. The simple fact that the sin was committed, and irreparably, ended my hesitations and gave me for the moment peace. I have since understood, remembering those moments, why it is that criminals, as soon as the deed is done, often enter upon a period of real repose, which sometimes enables them even to sleep on the scene of a murder. However, the mysterious voice

which says within us, 'That is wrong,' began to make me listen to it when I stood beside my sister. I had never, during the two years that I lived with her, had a single thought she did not know; and in my whole life, which was that of a good child, my only serious fault had been in gathering the best flowers in the garden, though forbidden to do so. I planted the stalks in my little barrow, which I had first of all filled with earth, intending to have a little garden all to myself. Surprised by a servant, I had taken the barrow in my arms, run up the staircase four steps at a time, and had flung the whole, earth and flowers, into a closet where they kept coal, at the end of a corridor, the door of which I could never, after that, pass without trembling, though no one spoke to me of my naughtiness. Once or twice my sister Blanche had looked at me rather strangely; so that one day I burst into tears and avowed my misdeed. She curled my hair round her fingers, as she was wont to do when she kept me by her for some time, and said with a smile, 'Did you really think you could hide anything from me?' And now, would she see in my eyes the sin I was wishing to hide,—greater far than my first little fault; would she see it, or would my brother-in-law the doctor, that serious man whose silent ways had always rather frightened me? But no; whether it were that Blanche was now too feeble, and my brother

in-law too preoccupied, or that I myself, as I grew older, had made more progress in the art of hypocrisy, I cannot tell; at any rate they merely asked me about my uncle and aunt, looked at the book I had received, and sent me to bed. My first act while Miette lighted the candle was to wrap the piece of gold in my handkerchief. I slipped it under my pillow so that when she undressed me my good nurse should not discover it. She took off my clothes as usual, and made me kneel down at the foot of the bed to say my prayers. She herself took my shoe and placed it in a corner of the fireplace to receive my Christmas presents. The wind had risen. It began to blow about the Place d'Armes with the mutterings that you and I have so often listened to together. Why should Miette, who never uttered twenty words an hour, suddenly say to me: 'Think of the poor folks who have no shelter on such a night as this!' So saying, she took the copper warming-pan out of my bed. The window curtains were drawn, the fire burned clear, in short, everything in my room told of the comfortable life I was then living with my dear sister Blanche. It was not the first time that a feeling of profound security, made tangible by the sight of these familiar objects, swelled my heart delightfully; but now, as I slid between the well-warmed sheets, instead of clinging to that feeling I suf-

ferred my thoughts to wander to the poor blind man standing in the church porch and lashed by the keen north wind. 'Charity, good people, charity,' said his voice. 'I have robbed that man,' I thought suddenly,—'robbed—robbed—robbed.' I repeated the word again and again. My nurse had blown out the light and left the room; the flickering of the embers on the hearth gave fantastic shapes to the objects about me. I felt for my handkerchief and took out the piece of gold, and held it in my hand to drive away the shame which brought the hot blood to my face, though I was all alone and no one to see me. Yes, *it* was in my hand; I held it, and with it I seemed to hold that coveted toy. But stay, not quite. I should have to explain to my sister how those ten francs came into my possession. Could I tell her that my uncle had given them to me? Impossible. She would speak of them. He would tell her he did not give them, and I should be lost. Should I wait a few weeks and declare they were the fruit of my saving? On the fingers of my empty hand I counted up the weeks, and found it would take half a year to give that tale any semblance of probability, and by that time the sabre might be sold. Bah! how silly I was not to have thought at once of a good way! I would go out with my nurse in the afternoon, taking the coin in the palm of my hand, and then, suddenly, I would stoop as if to pick it up, and

show it to her. I was sharp-sighted and observing, and several times already I had found things in the street, the gold-piece would be only one find the more. Yes, that was a good plan; I decided on it and I turned over on my side to go to sleep. I could not sleep. I saw myself in my sister's presence telling her that lie. I felt, as I thought of it, that my cheeks would burn, and that all within me would cry out—what? My theft. Yes, a theft! To steal is to take something that does not belong to us, and that piece of gold did not belong to me. It belonged to the first beggar I met on the way home, and that beggar was the blind man at the Capucins. I suddenly heard him say, in that drawling voice of his, 'Thief—thief!' I was a thief. The thought wrung my heart with a feeling that was well-nigh intolerable. A thief! but that was the deepest of all disgraces! A thief! like the two men you and I once saw, don't you remember? one summer's evening crossing the Place d'Armes between two gendarmes,—in rags, their faces filthy with dust and sweat, their eyes surly, and their hands bound together with chains."

"I remember that your Cousin Lucien was with us on that occasion," I remarked.

"Well," continued Claude, "that picture of shame possessed me, oppressed me, crushed me, and with it came such intense disgust for my own action that when I thought of that gilded sabre I

saw plainly that I should never have the slightest pleasure in wearing it. I imagined it hanging at my side. You or some one else would compliment me upon it. How could I look you in the face and take your congratulations? I put my arm out of bed and laid the stolen gold-piece on the table by my bedside. It seemed to burn me. 'No,' I said, 'no, I will not keep it. I will throw it away to-morrow, or I will give it to some other beggar.' This resolution taken, I signed myself with the cross and said an *Ave* to confirm it. I sat up, and in the darkness I hid that accursed coin in the depths of my table drawer, and then I tried to sleep. But these distresses had given me a sort of fever. My ideas were roused; never in my life had I thought so rapidly. The talk I had heard at my uncle's surged up in my mind. The conversation on presentiments and occult influences returned to me, and with it the recollection of my Cousin Lucien. 'That,' he had said, when he showed me the gold-piece, 'look at it well; that is my fetich.' The strange impression of mystery which the word forced upon me when I first heard it now came back to me, and I reasoned upon it. By not giving that gold-piece to the first beggar, I had not only committed a theft, but I had failed in my promise to Lucien. Perhaps I had brought him ill-luck; those very words had been used, back and forth, in the conversation. I then beheld, in thought

and with something like the minuteness of an hallucination, my cousin leaving his own house and taking the same road that I had taken. His left leg dragged a little. The fur collar of his overcoat was pulled up; his right hand held his sword-cane,—a straight cane which only needed to be thrown forward with a slight but quick motion to send out a sharp steel blade about five inches long. I heard him whistle the favorite tune of that year, 'I am the major.' He turned the angle of the cathedral and went up the steps of the club. There my vision was blurred. I had never seen a card-room except on the cover of a book—"

"Place des Petits-Arbres on the stall of Père Duchier?" I said.

"Exactly," he replied. "Don't you remember that frightful engraving? It represented a mound of bank-bills and louis lying on a table, and a number of persons struggling in a frantic sort of way for them, and then, in a corner, a young man in the act of putting a pistol to his head. I was unable to put the vision of that engraving out of my mind. It is with children as it is with lovers: whatever is conceived of as possible is instantly accepted as a reality. I turned and re-turned in my bed, a prey to such anxiety that I finally sat up, lighted a candle, and looked at my watch. I had been lying there only one hour. I pondered. '*That must not happen,*'

I said aloud, and my own voice frightened me. That! what? I could not have answered, and yet I felt myself borne down by the expectation of some horrible disaster. 'This must be a presentiment,' I thought; and I remembered the death of the marshal whose heroic bronze face I had so often gazed at. This recollection of an actual fact gave a character of absolute reality to my fears. I was as much overcome with horror as if the thing dreaded were there before me. 'But what can I do? what can I do?' I kept saying in despair. By the light of my candle I looked at the piece of gold for the first time. It was a coin of the Republic of 1848, and was marked with a cross, which some gambler may have traced there with the point of a penknife. With my nerves all unstrung as they were, this cabalistic sign struck me with a sudden superstitious terror, the agony of which I can recall at this moment. Probably these ideas suggested the church to me. I saw the dog and the chain, the eyelids of the blind man, the hat held out; an idea, an irresistible idea, took possession of me. I must, at any risk, undo what I had done, and that very night, too. I must, I *must* go back to the church and put the gold-piece in the beggar's hat. A crazy resolution of course, but one that it was possible to carry out. I never for a moment thought of asking my nurse to do it for me; I should have had to explain to her, and death was preferable

to that. My sister and her husband had gone to bed ; the servants were waiting in the kitchen till it was time for the midnight mass. The kitchen was in the front of the house on the ground-floor. At the other end of the corridor, facing the entrance, was a door leading into the garden, which was latched. The garden communicated with the street by a low gate, the key of which hung in the woodshed. It was therefore easy enough for me to get out unseen, provided I made no noise. In a quarter of an hour I could go and return. Suppose I were caught ? Well, I would say that I wanted to hear the midnight mass. I should be terribly scolded ; but a sense of justice, common to children and to animals, made me accept the fear of some punishment for my wicked deed. Besides, it was enough for me to perceive the possibility of undoing my wickedness to have it become in my eyes an imperative necessity. My anguish had been too great, and the comfort was sure. Imagine me therefore slipping from my bed and putting on, one by one, the garments Miette had laid on a chair. My shoes I took in my hand—at the risk of losing my Christmas presents if the child Jesus came down the chimney in my absence. Then I crept down the staircase, my heart beating violently at the least sound, and opened the door into the garden, the creaking of which made me almost faint away. A minute more and I was in the street, all alone, for the

first time in my life after eleven o'clock at night. You know how susceptible I was of being terrified, owing to that weakness of the nervous system which I had in common with my poor sister. Is there any childish panic that I have not endured? Beings and ideas both have always haunted me. I was afraid of that man hidden under the bed who is going to catch you by the leg; afraid of falling into a swoon and being buried alive; afraid of ghosts, afraid of demons, thieves, fairies, and heaven knows what. But now, at the moment of which I am telling you, as I ran upon the snow in those deserted streets, one fixed idea made me completely insensible to my ordinary terrors. I ran along the icy and slippery street with that accursed piece of money in my hand, my hat over my eyes, and thinking only of getting to the church as fast as possible. Ah! I shall live to be very old before I forget the awful despair which took possession of me as I turned the corner by the hospital. I made a misstep, my foot slipped, I fell on the snow, and as I fell the gold-piece dropped from my fingers. Vainly I searched for it, scratching up the snow with my nails; vainly I wept as I groped about me. Eleven o'clock was ringing from the bell-tower. I was forced to go home with empty hands and a heart tortured by unquenchable remorse. One misfortune was spared to me; I was able to get back without discovery."

"What followed?" I asked, finding that he remained silent.

"You know it only too well," he answered. "It was that very night that Lucien, having lost at baccarat a sum that was enormous for him, lost his head as well, and cheated. And he did it by the stupidest of all tricks, the one they call, in gambler's slang, *poussette*, which consists in pushing forward a banknote lying just across the line for the stakes when the stakes win, and drawing it back if they lose. Lucien was caught in the act. What more can I tell you? I know all you'll say,—that it was a mere coincidence, and probably not the first time my cousin had cheated; and that a passion for gambling like his is sure to ruin a man in the long run. But why have I never been able to overcome the remorse caused me by this one, solitary, dishonest action of my childhood, which made me an honest man for the rest of my life? Why should this Christmas Eve, so gay and happy for others, be to me the most melancholy, the most depressing of anniversaries?"

"Then," I said to him after another silence, "you don't care much, do you, for our midnight supper?"

"Do you?" he said.

"After such a history, no indeed," I replied. "Give me some tea and let us talk about Auvergne and our mountain excursions, and get rid of these sad thoughts."

Sad indeed they were, for even the conversation about our childhood, which usually had the privilege of distracting his mind in its darkest moments, did not succeed in chasing away the clouds these memories had gathered on his brow. I myself—for superstition is contagious—am not quite convinced that his remorse was morbid, and that he was not, in some slight degree, the cause of his cousin's disaster.

THE NECKLACE
BY
GUY DE MAUPASSANT

From "The Odd Number." Translated by Jonathan
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THE NECKLACE

BY GUY DE MAUPASSANT

SHE was one of those pretty and charming girls who are sometimes, as if by a mistake of destiny, born in a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no means of being known, understood, loved, wedded, by any rich and distinguished man; and she let herself be married to a little clerk at the Ministry of Public Instruction.

She dressed plainly because she could not dress well, but she was as unhappy as though she had really fallen from her proper station; since with women there is neither caste nor rank; and beauty, grace, and charm act instead of family and birth. Natural fineness, instinct for what is elegant, suppleness of wit, are the sole hierarchy, and make from women of the people the equals of the very greatest ladies.

She suffered ceaselessly, feeling herself born for all the delicacies and all the luxuries. She suffered from the poverty of her dwelling, from the wretched look of the walls, from the worn-out chairs, from the ugliness of the curtains. All those things, of which another woman of her rank would never even have been conscious, tor-

tured her and made her angry. The sight of the little Breton peasant who did her humble housework aroused in her regrets which were despairing, and distracted dreams. She thought of the silent ante-chambers hung with Oriental tapestry, lit by tall bronze candelabra, and of the two great footmen in knee-breeches who sleep in the big arm-chairs, made drowsy by the heavy warmth of the hot-air stove. She thought of the long *salons* fitted up with ancient silk, of the delicate furniture carrying priceless curiosities, and of the coquettish perfumed boudoirs made for talks at five o'clock with intimate friends, with men famous and sought after, whom all women envy and whose attention they all desire.

When she sat down to dinner, before the round table covered with a table-cloth three days old, opposite her husband, who uncovered the soup-tureen and declared with an enchanted air, "Ah, the good *pot-au-feu*! I don't know anything better than that," she thought of dainty dinners, of shining silverware, of tapestry which peopled the walls with ancient personages and with strange birds flying in the midst of a fairy forest; and she thought of delicious dishes served on marvellous plates, and of the whispered gallantries which you listen to with a sphinx-like smile, while you are eating the pink flesh of a trout or the wings of a quail.

She had no dresses, no jewels, nothing. And

she loved nothing but that ; she felt made for that. She would so have liked to please, to be envied, to be charming, to be sought after.

She had a friend, a former schoolmate at the convent, who was rich, and whom she did not like to go and see any more, because she suffered so much when she came back.

But, one evening, her husband returned home with a triumphant air, and holding a large envelope in his hand.

"There," said he, "here is something for you."

She tore the paper sharply, and drew out a printed card which bore these words :

"The Minister of Public Instruction and Mme. Georges Ramponneau request the honor of M. and Mme. Loisel's company at the palace of the Ministry on Monday evening, January 18th."

Instead of being delighted, as her husband hoped, she threw the invitation on the table with disdain, murmuring :

"What do you want me to do with that ?"

"But, my dear, I thought you would be glad. You never go out, and this is such a fine opportunity. I had awful trouble to get it. Every one wants to go ; it is very select, and they are not giving many invitations to clerks. The whole official world will be there."

She looked at him with an irritated eye, and she said, impatiently :

"And what do you want me to put on my back?"

He had not thought of that; he stammered :

"Why, the dress you go to the theatre in. It looks very well, to me."

He stopped, distracted, seeing that his wife was crying. Two great tears descended slowly from the corners of her eyes towards the corners of her mouth. He stuttered :

"What's the matter? What's the matter?"

But, by a violent effort, she had conquered her grief, and she replied, with a calm voice, while she wiped her wet cheeks :

"Nothing. Only I have no dress, and therefore I can't go to this ball. Give your card to some colleague whose wife is better equipped than I."

He was in despair. He resumed :

"Come, let us see, Mathilde. How much would it cost, a suitable dress, which you could use on other occasions, something very simple?"

She reflected several seconds, making her calculations and wondering also what sum she could ask without drawing on herself an immediate refusal and a frightened exclamation from the economical clerk.

Finally, she replied, hesitatingly :

"I don't know exactly, but I think I could manage it with four hundred francs."

He had grown a little pale, because he was laying aside just that amount to buy a gun and treat himself to a little shooting next summer on the plain of Nanterre, with several friends who went to shoot larks down there, of a Sunday.

But he said:

"All right. I will give you four hundred francs. And try to have a pretty dress."

The day of the ball drew near, and Mme. Loisel seemed sad, uneasy, anxious. Her dress was ready, however. Her husband said to her one evening:

"What is the matter? Come, you've been so queer these last three days."

And she answered:

"It annoys me not to have a single jewel, not a single stone, nothing to put on. I shall look like distress. I should almost rather not go at all."

He resumed:

"You might wear natural flowers. It's very stylish at this time of the year. For ten francs you can get two or three magnificent roses."

She was not convinced.

"No; there's nothing more humiliating than to look poor among other women who are rich."

But her husband cried:

"How stupid you are! Go look up your friend Mme. Forestier, and ask her to lend you some jewels. You're quite thick enough with her to do that."

She uttered a cry of joy:

"It's true. I never thought of it."

The next day she went to her friend and told of her distress.

Mme. Forestier went to a wardrobe with a glass door, took out a large jewel-box, brought it back, opened it, and said to Mme. Loisel:

"Choose, my dear."

She saw first of all some bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a Venetian cross, gold, and precious stones of admirable workmanship. She tried on the ornaments before the glass, hesitated, could not make up her mind to part with them, to give them back. She kept asking:

"Have n't you any more?"

- "Why, yes. Look. I don't know what you like."

All of a sudden she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb necklace of diamonds; and her heart began to beat with an immoderate desire. Her hands trembled as she took it. She fastened it around her throat, outside her high-necked dress, and remained lost in ecstasy at the sight of herself.

Then she asked, hesitating, filled with anguish:

"Can you lend me that, only that?"

"Why, yes, certainly."

She sprang upon the neck of her friend, kissed her passionately, then fled with her treasure.

The day of the ball arrived. Mme. Loisel made a great success. She was prettier than them all, elegant, gracious, smiling, and crazy with joy. All the men looked at her, asked her name, endeavored to be introduced. All the attachés of the Cabinet wanted to waltz with her. She was remarked by the minister himself.

She danced with intoxication, with passion, made drunk by pleasure, forgetting all, in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness composed of all this homage, of all this admiration, of all these awakened desires, and of that sense of complete victory which is so sweet to woman's heart.

She went away about four o'clock in the morning. Her husband had been sleeping since midnight, in a little deserted ante-room, with three other gentlemen whose wives were having a very good time.

He threw over her shoulders the wraps which he had brought, modest wraps of common life, whose poverty contrasted with the elegance of the ball dress. She felt this and wanted to escape so as not to be remarked by the other

women, who were enveloping themselves in costly furs.

Loisel held her back.

"Wait a bit. You will catch cold outside. I will go and call a cab."

But she did not listen to him, and rapidly descended the stairs. When they were in the street they did not find a carriage; and they began to look for one, shouting after the cabmen whom they saw passing by at a distance.

They went down towards the Seine, in despair, shivering with cold. At last they found on the quay one of those ancient noctambulant coupés which, exactly as if they were ashamed to show their misery during the day, are never seen round Paris until after nightfall.

It took them to their door in the Rue des Martyrs, and once more, sadly, they climbed up homeward. All was ended, for her. And as to him, he reflected that he must be at the Ministry at ten o'clock.

She removed the wraps, which covered her shoulders, before the glass, so as once more to see herself in all her glory. But suddenly she uttered a cry. She had no longer the necklace around her neck!

Her husband, already half-undressed, demanded:

"What is the matter with you?"

She turned madly towards him:

"I have—I have—I 've lost Mme. Forestier's necklace."

He stood up, distracted.

"What!—how?—Impossible!"

And they looked in the folds of her dress, in the folds of her cloak, in her pockets, everywhere. They did not find it.

He asked :

"You're sure you had it on when you left the ball?"

"Yes, I felt it in the vestibule of the palace."

"But if you had lost it in the street we should have heard it fall. It must be in the cab."

"Yes. Probably. Did you take his number?"

"No. And you, did n't you notice it?"

"No."

They looked, thunderstruck, at one another. At last Loisel put on his clothes.

"I shall go back on foot," said he, "over the whole route which we have taken, to see if I can't find it."

And he went out. She sat waiting on a chair in her ball dress, without strength to go to bed, overwhelmed, without fire, without a thought.

Her husband came back about seven o'clock. He had found nothing.

He went to Police Headquarters, to the newspaper offices, to offer a reward; he went to the cab companies—everywhere, in fact, whither he was urged by the least suspicion of hope.

She waited all day, in the same condition of mad fear before this terrible calamity.

Loisel returned at night with a hollow, pale face; he had discovered nothing.

"You must write to your friend," said he, "that you have broken the clasp of her necklace and that you are having it mended. That will give us time to turn round."

She wrote at his dictation.

At the end of a week they had lost all hope.

And Loisel, who had aged five years, declared :

"We must consider how to replace that ornament."

The next day they took the box which had contained it, and they went to the jeweller whose name was found within. He consulted his books.

"It was not I, madame, who sold that necklace; I must simply have furnished the case."

Then they went from jeweller to jeweller, searching for a necklace like the other, consulting their memories, sick both of them with chagrin and with anguish.

They found, in a shop at the Palais Royal, a string of diamonds which seemed to them exactly like the one they looked for. It was worth forty thousand francs. They could have it for thirty-six.

So they begged the jeweller not to sell it for three days yet. And they made a bargain that

he should buy it back for thirty-four thousand francs, in case they found the other one before the end of February.

Loisel possessed eighteen thousand francs which his father had left him. He would borrow the rest.

He did borrow, asking a thousand francs of one, five hundred of another, five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes, took up ruinous obligations, dealt with usurers, and all the race of lenders. He compromised all the rest of his life, risked his signature without even knowing if he could meet it; and, frightened by the pains yet to come, by the black misery which was about to fall upon him, by the prospect of all the physical privations and of all the moral tortures which he was to suffer, he went to get the new necklace, putting down upon the merchant's counter thirty-six thousand francs.

When Mme. Loisel took back the necklace Mme. Forestier said to her, with a chilly manner:

"You should have returned it sooner, I might have needed it."

She did not open the case, as her friend had so much feared. If she had detected the substitution, what would she have thought, what would she have said? Would she not have taken Mme. Loisel for a thief?

Mme. Loisel now knew the horrible existence of the needy. She took her part, moreover, all

on a sudden, with heroism. That dreadful debt must be paid. She would pay it. They dismissed their servant; they changed their lodgings; they rented a garret under the roof.

She came to know what heavy house-work meant and the odious cares of the kitchen. She washed the dishes, using her rosy nails on the greasy pots and pans. She washed the dirty linen, the shirts, and the dish-cloths, which she dried upon a line; she carried the slops down to the street every morning, and carried up the water, stopping for breath at every landing. And, dressed like a woman of the people, she went to the fruiterer, the grocer, the butcher, her basket on her arm, bargaining, insulted, defending her miserable money sou by sou.

Each month they had to meet some notes, renew others, obtain more time.

Her husband worked in the evening making a fair copy of some tradesman's accounts, and late at night he often copied manuscript for five sous a page.

And this life lasted ten years.

At the end of ten years they had paid everything, everything, with the rates of usury, and the accumulations of the compound interest.

Mme. Loisel looked old now. She had become the woman of impoverished households—strong and hard and rough. With frowsy hair, skirts askew, and red hands, she talked loud while

washing the floor with great swishes of water. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down near the window, and she thought of that gay evening of long ago, of that ball where she had been so beautiful and so fêted.

What would have happened if she had not lost that necklace? Who knows? who knows? How life is strange and changeful! How little a thing is needed for us to be lost or to be saved!

[But, one Sunday, having gone to take a walk in the Champs Elysées to refresh herself from the labors of the week, she suddenly perceived a woman who was leading a child. It was Mme. Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still charming.

Mme. Loisel felt moved. Was she going to speak to her? Yes, certainly. And now that she had paid, she was going to tell her all about it. Why not?

She went up.

"Good-day, Jeanne."

The other, astonished to be familiarly addressed by this plain goodwife, did not recognize her at all, and stammered:

"But—madame!—I do not know— You must have mistaken."

"No. I am Mathilde Loisel."

Her friend uttered a cry.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! How you are changed!"

"Yes, I have had days hard enough, since I have seen you, days wretched enough—and that because of you!"

"Of me! How so?"

"Do you remember that diamond necklace which you lent me to wear at the ministerial ball?"

"Yes. Well?"

"Well, I lost it."

"What do you mean? You brought it back."

"I brought you back another just like it. And for this we have been ten years paying. You can understand that it was not easy for us, us who had nothing. At last it is ended, and I am very glad."

Mme. Forestier had stopped.

"You say that you bought a necklace of diamonds to replace mine?"

"Yes. You never noticed it, then! They were very like."

And she smiled with a joy which was proud and naïve at once.

Mme. Forestier, strongly moved, took her two hands.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! Why, my necklace was paste. It was worth at most five hundred francs!"

THE BLACK PEARL

BY

VICTORIEN SARDOU

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THE BLACK PEARL

BY VICTORIEN SARDOU

CHAPTER I.

WHEN it rains in Amsterdam, it pours ; and when the thunder takes a hand in the performance things are pretty lively ; this is what my friend Balthazar Van der Lys was saying to himself one summer night, as he ran along the Amstel on his way home to escape the storm. Unfortunately, the wind of the Zuiderzee blew faster than he could run. A frightful gust tore along the quay, unhinging hundreds of shutters and twisting scores of signs and lamp-posts. At the same moment, a number of towels and handkerchiefs which had been hung out to dry were blown pell-mell into the canal, followed by Balthazar's hat, and it is the greatest wonder in the world that he was not treated to a bath himself. Then there was another flash of lightning, a deafening roar of thunder, and the rain came down in torrents anew, literally wetting our poor friend to the skin, and causing him to redouble his speed.

On reaching the Orphelinat Straat he rushed under the awning of a shop to seek refuge from the rain; in his hurry he did not take time to look where he was going, and the next moment he found himself fairly in the arms of another man, and the two went rolling over and over together. The person thus disturbed was seated at the time in an arm-chair; this person was no other than our mutual friend, Cornelius Pump, who was undoubtedly one of the most noted savants of the age.

"Cornelius! what the mischief were you doing in that chair?" asked Balthazar, picking himself up.

"Look out!" exclaimed Cornelius, "or you will break the string of my kite!"

Balthazar turned around, believing that his friend was joking; but, to his surprise, he saw Cornelius busily occupied in winding up the string of a gigantic kite, which was floating above the canal at a tremendous height, and which apparently was struggling fiercely against all effort made to pull it in. Cornelius pulled away with all his might in one direction, while the kite pulled away in another. The monstrous combination of paper and sticks was ornamented with a tremendous tail, which was decorated with innumerable pieces of paper.

"A curious idea!" remarked Balthazar, "to fly a kite in such a storm."

"I am not doing so for fun, you fool," answered Cornelius with a smile; "I wish to verify the presence of nitric acid in yonder clouds, which are charged with electricity. In proof of which, behold!" and with a desperate effort the man of science succeeded in pulling down the kite, and pointed with pride to the bits of paper which had been burned a dark red.

"Oh, bah!" replied Balthazar in that tone of voice so common to those who do not understand anything of these little freaks of science. "A nice time to experiment, upon my word!"

"The best time in the world, my friend," simply answered Cornelius. "And what an observatory! you can see for yourself! there is not an obstruction in the way! a glorious horizon! ten lightning-rods in sight and all on fire! I have been keeping my weather eye open for this storm, and I am delighted that it has put in an appearance at last!"

A violent thunder-clap shook the ground like an earthquake.

"Go on! grumble away as much as you please," muttered Cornelius. "I have discovered your secret and will tell it to the world."

"And what is there so interesting in all this, anyway?" asked Balthazar, who, owing to his drenching, was in anything but a good humor.

"You poor fool," replied Cornelius, with a smile of pity; "now tell me, what is that?"

"Why, a flash of lightning, of course!"

"Naturally! but what is the nature of that flash?"

"Why, I always supposed that all flashes were alike."

"That shows how much you know!" answered Cornelius, in a tone of disgust. "Now, there are several classes of lightning; for instance, lightning of the *first class* is generally in the form of a luminous furrow and is very crooked and forked, affecting a zig-zag movement, and of a white or purple color; then, there is the lightning of the *second class*, an extended sheet of flame, usually red, and which embraces the entire horizon in circumference; and finally, lightning of the *third class*, which is invariably in the form of a rebounding, rolling, spherical body; the question is whether it is really globular in shape or merely an optical illusion? This is exactly the problem I have been trying to solve! I suppose you will say that these globes of fire have been sufficiently observed by Howard, Schübler, Kamtz—"

"Oh, I don't know anything at all about such rot, so I won't venture an opinion. The rain is coming down again and I want to go home."

"Wait a moment," calmly replied Cornelius; "and as soon as I have seen a spherical or globular flash I will—"

"I have n't time to wait; besides, I would be

a fool when I only have to go a hundred feet to reach my door. If you want a good fire, a good supper, a good bed, and a good pipe, you will be welcome; and if you want to look at a globe, why, the globe of my lamp is at your disposal. I can say no more."

"Stop a moment, my flash will be along presently."

Balthazar, whose patience was now well-nigh exhausted, was preparing to take his departure, when suddenly the sky was lighted up by a bright flash, while the thunder burst with a loud report a short distance away. The shock was so violent that it almost knocked Balthazar over.

"That was a spherical globe, and no mistake!" joyfully exclaimed Cornelius; "I have made a wonderful discovery: let's go to supper!" Balthazar rubbed his eyes and felt of his limbs to assure himself that he was still in the land of the living.

"The lightning struck near my house!"

"Not at all," replied Cornelius, "it was in the direction of the Hebrew quarter."

Balthazar did not stop to hear any more, but started off on a dead run; Cornelius picked up his little bits of paper and was soon following at his heels, in spite of the drenching rain.

CHAPTER II.

AN hour later the two friends, having enjoyed a bountiful supper, seated themselves in comfortable chairs, and between the whiffs of their meerschaums laughed at the storm which was still raging furiously outside.

"This is what I call real enjoyment," remarked Cornelius. "A good bottle of white curacao, a good fire, good tobacco, and a congenial friend to talk to; am I not right, Christina?"

Christina came and went; she was here, there, and everywhere at the same time, removing plates and placing fresh glasses and a huge earthen jug on the table. At the mention of her name by Cornelius she blushed a fiery red, but said nothing in reply.

Christina (it is high time that we tell you) was a young girl who had been raised out of charity, in the house of our friend Balthazar.

Shortly after the death of her husband, Madame Van der Lys, Balthazar's mother, felt some one tugging at her dress as she was kneeling at her devotions one Sunday morning; fearing that some one was trying to pick her pocket she grasped the hand of the supposed offender. The hand belonged to a little girl, and was as cute and small as it is possible for a hand to be. The good woman

was deeply moved at this exhibition of crime in one so young, and her first thought was to let the little one go; but she finally decided to give the waif a home, like the dear, good woman that she was. Then she led little Christina out of the church and made her accompany her home, the child crying all the while with fear that her *aunt* would whip her. Madame Van der Lys told her not to be afraid, and succeeded at last in obtaining the information that the child's parents belonged to that class of idlers who spend their time in running about fairs and kermesses; that the child had been broken in at an early age to all the tricks adopted by strolling mountebanks; that the father had been killed while performing a dangerous feat on the horizontal bar; that the mother died in want and misery; and finally that the *aunt* was an old hag who used to beat her black and blue, and who was instructing her in all the branches of crime. I do not know whether you have ever met Madame Van der Lys, but she was as good a woman as her son is good a man. She therefore decided to keep the child, whom *the aunt* never called to reclaim. She brought her up well and had her educated by an excellent woman. It was not long before the little waif knew how to spell, read, and write, and she soon became a model of good manners and refinement. Then, when the old lady shuffled off this mortal coil she had the satisfaction

of leaving behind her, in addition to Gudule, the cook, a lass of fifteen who was as bright as a florin, and who would never permit her master's fire to go out for want of proper attention. In addition to all these good qualities, she was polite, refined, clever, and pretty; at least such was the opinion of our friend Cornelius, who had discovered in her eyes a look not at all unlike a flash of lightning of the *third class*. But, a truce to this! If I gossip any more I will be divulging family secrets!

I will add, however, that Christina always gave Cornelius a hearty welcome because he brought her interesting books. The young savant made a greater fuss over this little housekeeper than over all the painted beauties of the town. But it seemed as if the storm had paralyzed the young girl's tongue. She had declined to take her seat at the table, and, under the pretext of waiting on the two friends, she came and went, scarcely listening to what they had to say, replying only in monosyllables, and making the sign of the cross every time there was a flash of lightning. Shortly after their supper, Balthazar turned round to ask her a question, but she was no longer there, having retired to her room. He rose from his chair, and approaching the door of her room, listened attentively; but as all was silent he was evidently convinced that the young girl was already fast asleep, for he returned to his place

and sat down beside Cornelius, who was busily engaged filling his pipe.

"What's wrong with Christina to-night?" he asked, pointing to her room.

"Oh, it's the storm," replied Balthazar; "women are so timid!"

"If it were otherwise, we would be deprived of the pleasure of protecting them as we would children—especially Christina, who is anything but strong. I really can't look at her without crying; she is so frail, so delicate!"

"Oh, ho, master Cornelius!" exclaimed Balthazar, with a knowing smile; "you are almost as enthusiastic over Christina as you were over the lightning a little while ago!"

Cornelius blushed to the very roots of his hair as he replied: "Oh, it's not the same kind of enthusiasm, however!"

"I suppose not!" remarked Balthazar with a hearty laugh. Then, taking Cornelius by the hand and looking him square in the face, he added: "Come now, you don't imagine that I can't see what is going on? You don't only amuse yourself at flying your kite over the Amstel, overgrown boy that you are, but you also play at racquets with Christina, and your two hearts answer the place of shuttlecocks."

"What, you suppose that—" muttered the servant, evidently confused.

"For over three months I have known that it

was not merely to see my beautiful countenance that you have called here twice a day—at noon, on your way to the zoological garden, and at four on your way home.”

“But this is the shortest way,” ventured Cornelius.

“Yes, I know—to the heart ! ”

“But—”

“Come, now, let us reason : Christina is unlike most girls of her age ; she has a wise head and a loving heart, I assure you ; she is certainly clever enough to admire and appreciate such a talented person as Mijtheer Cornelius Pump, who thinks nothing of lending her his rare books. You squeeze her hands, you are solicitous for her health. You read her a regular lecture on chemistry every time you see a spot on her dress, on natural history whenever you see a pot of flowers, and on anatomy whenever you see the cat ! She listens to what you have to say with open ears, and a look of attention which is really charming ; and yet you would pretend that love is a minor consideration in all this, especially when the man of science is only twenty-five and his pupil just eighteen ? ”

“Well, then, I do love her, since you will have it so ! ” answered Cornelius, with a look of defiance in his eyes. “So kindly tell me what you propose to do about it ! ”

“That’s for you to say—”

"Oh, I intend to make her my wife!"

"Then, why the mischief don't you tell her so?"

"That's precisely what I intend to do."

"Then embrace me!" exclaimed Balthazar, "and drink to the health of Cupid, for I, too, am going to get married!"

"I congratulate you, my boy; and who is the fortunate one?"

"And I am going to marry Mademoiselle Suzanne Van Miellis, the daughter of the rich banker," continued Balthazar, all in one breath.

Cornelius gave a low whistle, which, translated, means: the devil!

Balthazar continued:

"And just think of it—I have loved her for over six years! I never wanted to pop the question because I was afraid her father would tell me that it was his money and not his daughter that I was after. But my opportunity came at last. Her father died a short time ago, leaving her his sole heiress: she is one of the wealthiest girls in the town."

"The wealthiest by far," gravely interrupted Cornelius.

"One day as we were walking together by the river she stopped for a moment and looking into my eyes, she said: 'Now, my friend, I don't want you to bear me any ill-feeling for what I am going to say; but, since the death of my

father, and coming into my inheritance, I assure you that I am most unhappy. I can no longer distinguish between those who love me for my riches and those who love me for myself; there are so many who pretend to adore me that I am suspicious of them all; and I would rather throw my fortune into the Amstel than wed a man who would aspire to my hand through mercenary motives!’

“‘Ah, mademoiselle,’ I sighed; you can understand that I was not over-anxious to be mistaken for one of these fortune-hunters.

“‘Oh, my dear friend,’ she exclaimed, ‘I know that you are not that kind of a man. Now I am going to tell you my ideal of a husband. I would never accept the love of a man who had not cared for me previous to the death of my father. Ah! I would indeed be confident of that man’s love, and I would return it to him a hundred-fold!’

“‘Then I am that man!’ I cried out; ‘I have loved you for over six long years, and I never dared to tell you so, although you must have noticed that I was slowly but surely dying for the want of your affection!’ Then she looked down at the ground, and whispered: ‘Maybe I have,’ and she looked at me as if trying to read the truth in my eyes. It was easy to see that she wanted to believe what I said, but was afraid to do so.

“‘Then you can prove the truth of your assertion,’ she remarked, after a brief pause. ‘Do you remember the first time we met, you gave me a bunch of flowers? One of these was in the shape of a little heart, with two blue wings on each side. Well, then—’ ‘I know what you are going to say. Then as we were looking at this little flower together, our heads almost touched and your curls brushed against my face; as you perceived how close we were to one another, you suddenly drew back, and the flower was detached from its stem. I can still hear your little cry of disappointment ringing in my ears. Then you began to cry, and, as you were not looking, I picked up the little flower.’ ‘And you have it?’ she asked. ‘Yes, I have always kept it as a souvenir of the happiest moment in my existence. I will bring it with me the next time I call.’

“You should have seen the look of joy which spread over Suzanne’s countenance at that moment! She held out her pretty hand, which I eagerly grasped and carried to my lips. ‘Ah, my friend,’ said she, ‘this is all I wanted to know, and I am indeed happy! If you picked up that little flower it was because you loved me already at that time, and if you have preserved it, ’t is because you love me still! Bring it tomorrow; it will be the most welcome wedding-gift you could possibly give me!’

“Oh, my dear old Cornelius, judge of my sur-

prise, of my delight, when I heard those words! I was tempted to do something rash; I was wild with joy. Suddenly her mother happened along. I threw my arms around the old lady's neck and kissed her on both cheeks—this cooled me off. Then I grabbed my hat and took to my heels, intending to return with the flower this very night. But this confounded storm has upset all my plans, and I will have to postpone my visit until tomorrow. There, you have the whole story of my courtship in a nutshell!"

"May heaven be praised!" exclaimed Cornelius, as he threw his arms around his friend. "Two weddings at the same time! Long live Madame Balthazar! Long live Madame Cornelius! Here's to the little Balthazars and the little Corneliuses!"

"Will you be quiet!" laughingly remarked Balthazar, placing his hand over his friend's mouth in order to silence him. "You will wake up Christina."

"Oh, I won't say another word, I promise you. And now show me your celebrated flower with its blue wings."

"I have it locked up in a little steel casket, which is hidden away with a lot of jewelry in my desk. I have had it framed in a little locket, surrounded with gold and black pearls. I was looking at it only this morning; it is charming. you can judge for yourself."

So saying, he took up the lamp, and, taking a huge bunch of keys from his pocket, he opened the door of his study. He had hardly crossed the threshold when Cornelius heard him cry out in surprise. He rose to go to his assistance, when Balthazar, pale as death, reappeared in the entrance:

“My God! Cornelius.”

“What is it? what is wrong?” exclaimed the man of science.

“Great heavens! I am ruined! Come here! Look!”

And Balthazar raised his lamp so as to light up the interior of his study.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT Cornelius saw justified Balthazar's exclamation of surprise. The floor was literally strewn with papers of all kinds, and this profusion of documents clearly proved that something extraordinary had occurred. A large portfolio in which Balthazar kept all his private papers was torn open, notwithstanding that it had a steel lock, and was thrown carelessly on the floor, the papers it had contained being scattered far and wide.

But this was nothing when compared with that which was to follow. Balthazar now rushed up

to his secrétaire. The lock had been forced. The top of the desk had been completely hacked to pieces, a great portion being reduced to splinters. The nails were twisted all out of shape, and the screws and hinges had alike received rough usage. As to the lid, it had been forced so as to permit the introduction of a hand in the pigeon-holes and private drawers.

But, strange to relate, most of the drawers containing valuable papers had not been touched by the thief, his attention evidently having been entirely absorbed in the contents of those which had contained gold and silver. About fifteen hundred ducats, two hundred florins, and the little steel casket filled with jewels, of which we have heard Balthazar speak, were missing. This drawer was completely empty; everything had disappeared, gold, silver, jewels, without leaving a trace behind; and Balthazar experienced a still greater loss when, on picking up the steel casket from the floor, he perceived that the medallion had been taken along with the rest!

This discovery affected him more than the loss of all his money. Rushing to the window, he threw it open and cried out at the top of his voice:

“Help! Help! Stop thief!”

All the population turned out, and, in accordance with the custom, would have answered this call for aid with, “Fire! Here

we come!" had not the first cry attracted a squad of policemen who were passing that way. They ran up to Balthazar's house, and M. Tricamp, the sergeant, realizing that a robbery had been committed, first cautioned him to make less noise, and then demanded that he and his men be admitted without further delay.

CHAPTER IV.

THE door opened noiselessly and M. Tricamp entered on tiptoe, followed by another of his men, whom he left on guard in the vestibule, with orders not to permit any one either to come in or go out. It was almost twelve o'clock; the neighbors were fast asleep, and it was easy to see that Gudule, the deaf cook, and Christina, fatigued by the emotions caused by the storm, had heard nothing unusual, as both were sleeping the sleep of the just.

"And now," said the sergeant, lowering his voice, "what is it all about?"

Balthazar dragged him into the study and pointed to the torn papers and broken secrétaire.

M. Tricamp was a little man, whose legs were not big enough to support his unwieldy form; nevertheless, he was very sharp and unusually active. He had one more little peculiarity—he was frightfully near-sighted, which compelled

him to look at what he was examining at very short range.

He was evidently surprised, but it was part of his stock-in-trade not to exhibit surprise at anything. He therefore contented himself with muttering: "Very good! very good!" and he cast a look of contentment around the room.

"You see, Mijnheer, what has happened!" exclaimed Balthazar, with a voice choked with emotion.

"Perfectly!" replied M. Tricamp, with an air of importance. "The secrétaire has been broken open, your portfolio has been tampered with! Very well, it is superb!"

"Superb! Why, what do you mean?"

"They took all the money, I suppose?" continued the sergeant.

"Yes, all the money which was in my desk."

"Good!"

"And the jewels, and my medallion!"

"Bravo! a case of premeditated robbery! Capital! And you suspect no one?"

"No one, Mijnheer."

"So much the better. Then we will have the pleasure of discovering the criminals."

Balthazar and Cornelius looked at each other in surprise; but M. Tricamp continued in the same unconcerned manner:

"Let us examine the door!"

Balthazar pointed to the massive door of the

study, which was provided with an old-fashioned brass lock, the likes of which are only found in the Netherlands at the present time.

Tricamp turned the key. Crick! Crack! It was evident that the lock had not been tampered with.

"And the window?" asked the officer, handing Balthazar the key of the study.

"The window was closed," said Cornelius: "we opened it when we called for assistance. Besides, Mijnheer, it has stout iron bars, and no one could possibly pass through there."

M. Tricamp assured himself that such was the case, and he remarked that not even a child could effect an entrance through those bars. Then he closed and bolted the window and turned his attention towards the fireplace.

Balthazar followed all of his movements without uttering a word.

M. Tricamp leaned over and examined the interior of the fireplace most minutely; but here again nothing but failure rewarded him for his trouble. A thick wall had been built there recently, allowing only enough room for a small stovepipe.

M. Tricamp did not question for a moment whether this opening would permit the passage of a human being, for it seemed altogether too improbable, therefore, when he drew himself up, he appeared to be anything but pleased.

"Hum! Hum!" he muttered; "the devil," and he looked up at the ceiling, having replaced his eyeglass with a pair of spectacles. Then he took the lamp from Balthazar and placed it on the *secrétaire*, removing the shade; and this movement suddenly revealed to him a clue which had entirely escaped their attention until now.

CHAPTER V.

AN old knife, a gift from a friend in the Dutch Indies, was driven into the wainscoting, about three feet above the *secrétaire* and half-way between the floor and the ceiling.

Now, what was that old knife doing there?

A few hours previous to this discovery it was lying safe and snug in Balthazar's desk.

At the same moment Tricamp drew attention to the fact that the wire which was attached to the bell was twisted and broken and was fastened about the handle of the knife. He sprang upon a chair, and from there to the top of the desk, from whence he proceeded to examine this bit of fresh evidence.

Suddenly he gave a cry of triumph. He only had to raise his hand between the knife and the picture moulding to ascertain that a large piece of wall paper had been cut out, together with the wood and the plastering, the whole being replaced with a care to defy the closest inspection.

This discovery was so unexpected that the young men could not withhold their admiration at the sergeant's skill. M. Tricamp remarked that the paper had been removed with the greatest skill, thus denoting the work of a professional thief. Raising himself on tiptoe, he placed his hand through the opening and assured himself that the paper in the adjoining room had been tampered with in precisely the same manner.

There was no longer any room for doubt; the thief had certainly entered the room through this aperture. M. Tricamp descended from his pedestal and proceeded to describe the movements of the malefactors from the moment of their arrival until their departure, just as if he had witnessed the whole performance.

"The manner in which that knife has been planted in the wall plainly proves that it was intended as a step to assist the thief in his descent. The wire was used as a sort of rope by which he guided himself on his way back. Now, doesn't this strike you as being rational enough?"

Balthazar and Cornelius listened to this explanation with bated breath. But the former was not the kind of man to enthuse over a description of a theft, especially when he was the loser by the operation. What he wanted to know was where his medallion had gone; now that he knew how the thief had entered, he was anxious to know how he had gone out.

"Have patience," remarked M. Tricamp, following up his clue with professional pride; "now that we know their movements, we must assure ourselves as to their temperament—"

"What nonsense! We haven't the time to bother our heads about such rot!"

"Pardon me," replied Tricamp, "but in my estimation, this is very important. The study of psychology in criminals is a more important feature than all the quack examinations formerly so popular with the police."

"But, Mijneer, while you are discussing the methods of the police the thief is running away with my money."

"Well, let him run, we will catch him fast enough!" coldly replied M. Tricamp. "I claim that it is necessary to study the nature of the game in order to run it down. Now, all robberies differ more or less; and it is rarely that murders are committed in the same manner. For instance, two servant girls were accused of stealing their mistress's shawl. I discovered the criminal at the first glance. The thief had the choice of two cashmeres; one was blue and the other white; now, she stole the blue one. One of the servants was a blonde and the other had red hair. I was confident that the blonde was guilty—the red-headed girl would never have selected the blue shawl on account of the combination."

"Wonderful!" remarked Cornelius.

"Then hurry up and tell me the name of the thief, for my patience is well-nigh exhausted."

"I can't do this at the start, but I claim that this is the criminal's first robbery. You will no doubt not credit this assertion, as you will probably say to yourself that it shows the workmanship of an old hand; but any child could loosen a bit of dried-up wall-paper. I will say nothing regarding your portfolio, or your broken secrétaire, for that plainly bears the imprint of a novice's hand."

"Then you are sure it is the work of a novice?" interrupted Cornelius.

"Undoubtedly. I will add that he is a clumsy greenhorn. An out-and-out thief would never have left your room in such disorder; he would take more pride in his workmanship. Furthermore, the criminal is neither very strong nor very tall, otherwise he could have drawn himself up there without the aid of that knife and bit of wire."

"But it must have required considerable strength to demolish that desk in that fashion."

"Not at all; a child, or even a woman—"

"A woman?" exclaimed Balthazar.

"Since I first set my foot in this room, such has been my impression."

Balthazar and Cornelius looked at one another, in doubt as to whom he could possibly suspect.

"Now then, to sum up: it is a young woman; she must be young or she would not climb so well—petite, since she needed a wire to pull herself up with. Then, again, she must be familiar with your habits, for she took advantage of your absence to commit the felony, and she went direct to the drawer in which you kept your money, as she apparently did not bother her head about the others. In a word, if you have a young housekeeper or servant you need look no further, for she is the guilty one!"

"Christina!" exclaimed the young men in one breath.

"Ah! So there is a Christina about the premises!" remarked M. Tricamp smilingly; "well then, Christina is guilty!"

CHAPTER VI.

BOTH Cornelius and Balthazar were pale as death. Christina! Little Christina, so good, so kind, so pretty, a thief—nonsense! And then they remembered her origin and the manner in which she was adopted. She was only a Bohemian after all! Balthazar dropped into a chair as if he had been shot, and Cornelius felt as if his heart had just been seared with a red-hot iron.

"Will you kindly send for this person?" suddenly remarked M. Tricamp, awakening them

from their reverie. "Or, better still, let us visit her room."

"Her room—her room," faltered Balthazar; "why, there it is," and he pointed to the adjoining apartment.

"And it took all this time for you to make up your mind who had committed the theft!" said the sergeant with a sneer.

"But," ventured Cornelius, "she certainly must have heard us."

Tricamp picked up the lamp, and, pushing open the door of the adjoining room, entered, followed by the young men—the room was empty! Simultaneously they exclaimed, "She has escaped!"

M. Tricamp felt under the mattress to see whether he could find any of the stolen property. "She has not even slept on the bed to-night," he said, after carefully inspecting the couch.

At the same moment they heard the sound of struggling outside, and the officer who had been left on guard downstairs entered the room, pushing Christina before him. The poor girl appeared more surprised than afraid.

"This young woman was attempting to escape, Mijneer; I arrested her just as she was drawing the bolts of the back door," said the officer.

Christina looked around her with such an air of innocence that no one believed in her guilt, excepting, of course, M. Tricamp.

"But do tell me what this all means?" asked she of the officer who locked the door after her. "Why don't you tell them who I am?" she continued, addressing Balthazar.

"Where have you been?" he demanded.

"I have been upstairs with old Gudule, who, you know, is afraid of the lightning. As I was very tired, I fell asleep in the arm-chair in her room. When I awoke I looked out of the window, and as the storm had ceased I came downstairs with the intention of going to bed; but I first desired to assure myself that you had bolted the door, and it was at that moment that this gentleman placed his hand on my shoulder and informed me that I was under arrest. And, I assure you, he has given me a good fright—"

"You lie!" coarsely interrupted M. Tricamp. "You were just going out when my man arrested you; and I will add that you did not go to bed so as to avoid the trouble of dressing when the moment arrived for you to make your escape."

Christina looked at him in astonishment. "Escape? What escape?" she asked.

"Ah!" muttered M. Tricamp. "What nerve, what deceit!"

"Come here," said Balthazar, who knew not what to believe, "and I will tell you what it all means!"

He took the young girl by the arm and dragged her into the adjoining room.

"My God!" exclaimed the young woman, as she crossed the threshold and perceived the scene of devastation for the first time; "who could have done this?"

Her surprise seemed to be so sincere that Balthazar hesitated for a moment, but M. Tri-camp was not so easily affected; he dragged Christina by the arm up to the secrétaire and exclaimed:

"You did it!"

"I!" cried out Christina, who did not as yet realize what it all meant.

She looked at Balthazar as if to read his thoughts, then she cast a glance at the drawer of the secrétaire, and seeing that it was empty, she realized at last the terrible meaning of their accusation. With a heartrending cry, she exclaimed:

"My God! And you say I have done this!"

But no one had the courage to answer her; Christina advanced a step closer to Balthazar, but he only lowered his eyes at her approach. Suddenly she raised her hand to her heart, as if she were suffocating—she attempted to speak—she tried to pronounce two or three words, but all she could say was: "A thief! They say I am a thief!" and she fell backwards on the floor as if dead! Cornelius precipitated himself towards her and raised her gently in his arms.

"No!" he cried; "no! it is impossible! This child is innocent!"

Then he carried the young girl into her room and laid her on the bed. Balthazar followed him, and it was easy to see that he was deeply affected. M. Tricamp, still smiling, entered immediately after them, but one of his officers motioned to him that he had something to communicate to him.

"Mijnheer, we already have obtained some information regarding this young woman."

"Well, and what do you know?"

"The baker across the way says that a little while before the storm he saw Mademoiselle Christina at the window of the ground-floor. She slipped a package to a man who was standing outside; this man wore a long cloak and a slouch hat—"

"A package, eh?" muttered M. Tricamp; "excellent! Now, secure the witness, and keep a sharp watch outside. In the first place, go and send the cook to me at once."

The officer withdrew, and M. Tricamp entered Christina's room.

The young woman was stretched out on the bed in a dead faint, and Cornelius was rubbing her hands. Without stopping to notice the condition of the girl, he proceeded with his examination of the premises. He started in with the bureau and overhauled all the drawers. Then

he approached Balthazar with a smile of satisfaction on his face.

"After all, what proof is there that this young girl is guilty?" asked the latter as he gazed tenderly upon the unconscious woman.

"Why, this!" answered M. Tricamp, as he handed Balthazar one of the missing pearls.

"Where did you find this?"

"There," and he pointed to the top drawer of Christina's bureau.

Balthazar rushed up to the drawer and began to overhaul all of the young girl's effects, but his search did not result in his finding any more of the stolen jewels.

At this moment Christina opened her eyes, and looking around her as if to recall the situation, burst into tears as she buried her face in the pillow.

"Oh, ho!" ejaculated M. Tricamp, "tears, eh? She is going to confess;" and as he leaned over her, he added in his sweetest voice: "Come, my child, return good for evil and confess the truth. Confession is good for the soul. After all, we are not all perfect. Now, I suppose, you permitted yourself to be led astray, or you allowed yourself to succumb to a passion for finery. You wanted to make yourself look pretty, eh, my dear, to please some one you love?"

"What an idea, Mijnheer!" interrupted Cornelius.

"Hush, young man! I know what I am talking about. This woman has an accomplice as sure as my name is Tricamp;" and leaning over Christina, he continued, "Am I not right, my dear?"

"Oh, why don't you kill me, instead of torturing me thus!" cried Christina, with a fresh outburst of tears.

This was so unexpected that M. Tricamp started back in surprise.

"Kindly leave us alone with the girl, Mijnheer; your presence irritates her," remarked Balthazar; "if she has anything to confess she will do so to my friend and me."

M. Tricamp bowed himself out of the room.

"Oh, just as you please," he replied, "but be very careful; she is a clever minx."

CHAPTER VII.

CORNELIUS almost closed the door in the sergeant's face; then the two young men approached Christina, who had assumed a sitting posture, and was staring before her into space.

"Come, my child," said Balthazar, as he held out his hand; "we are now alone; you are with friends, so you need not be afraid."

"I don't want to stay—here! I want to go away! Oh, let me—let me go!"

"No, Christina, you cannot leave here until you answer us," said Cornelius.

"Tell us the truth, I beg of you, Christina," added Balthazar, "and I promise you no harm will come to you—I swear it on my honor. I will forgive you, and no one will ever know of this—I swear it, Christina, I swear it before God!—don't you hear me, my child?"

"Yes!" answered Christina, who did not appear to be listening. "Oh, if I could only cry—if I could only cry!"

Cornelius seized the young girl's burning hands in his. "Christina, my child, God forgive us all, and we love you too much not to pardon you. Listen to me, I beg you. Don't you recognize me?"

"Yes," said Christina, as her eyes filled with tears.

"Well, then, I love you, do you hear?—I love you with all my heart!"

"Oh!" said the young girl as she burst into tears; "and yet you believe that I am a thief!"

"No, no!" hastily exclaimed Cornelius, "I do not believe it, I do not believe it! but, my dear child, you must help me to justify you, you must assist me to discover the criminal, and to do this you must be frank and tell me everything."

"Yes, you are good, you alone are kind to me. You pity me and do not believe what they say! they accuse me because I am a Bohemian—be-

cause I stole when I was a child. And they call me *a thief!*—*a thief!*—They call me *a thief!*!”

And she fell backwards on the bed, sobbing as if her heart would burst.

Balthazar could stand this no longer: he fell upon his knees by the side of the bed, and exclaimed in a voice of pity as if he himself was the accused instead of the accuser:

“Christina, my sister, my child, my daughter—look at me! I am on my knees before you! I ask your forgiveness for the wrong I have done you. No one will say anything, no one will do anything; it is all over!—do you hear? I hope you do not wish to repay all the kindness my mother and I have shown you by making me suffer all the tortures of the damned? Well, then, I beg you to tell me what has become of my little medallion—(I do not ask you where it is, you understand?—I do not wish to know that, for I do not suspect you). But if you do know where it is, I beg of you to help me find it. I implore you by the love you bore my mother, whom you called your own, I implore you to find it—this is all I want. My future happiness depends on the recovery of this jewel—give me back my medallion—please give me back my medallion.”

“Oh!” answered Christina in despair, “I would give my life to be able to tell you where it is!”

"Christina!"

"But I have n't got it; I have n't got it!" she cried, wringing her hands.

Balthazar, exasperated, sprang to his feet: "But, wretched woman—"

Cornelius silenced him with a gesture, and Christina raised her hands to her forehead.

"Ah!" she said, as she burst into a loud laugh, "when I am mad, this farce will be ended, I suppose?"

And, overcome with emotion, she fell backward, hiding her face in the pillow as if determined not to utter another word.

CHAPTER VIII.

CORNELIUS dragged Balthazar out of the room; he staggered as though he had been shot. In the other room they found M. Tricamp, who had not been wasting his time. He had been cross-examining the old cook, Gudule, who, most unceremoniously aroused by one of the officers, was still half asleep.

"Come, come, my good woman," remarked M. Tricamp, "control yourself, if you please!"

"Oh, my good master, my good master!" she exclaimed, as Balthazar entered the room accompanied by Cornelius. "What's the matter; they dragged me out of bed, and they are asking me

all kinds of questions ! For mercy's sake, tell me what it is all about ! ”

“ Don't be alarmed, my good woman,” said Balthazar kindly, “ you have nothing to do with all this. But I have been robbed and we are looking for the thief.”

“ You have been robbed ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ My God ! I have lived in this house for over thirty years, and not as much as a pin was ever stolen before ! Oh, Mijnheer, why did n't they wait until I was dead before they began their thieving ? ”

“ Come, come, don't give way like that, my good woman,” said M. Tricamp.

“ You will have to speak a little louder, Mijnheer, the woman is deaf,” remarked Balthazar.

“ Now, I want to know whether you were in the house when the robbery was committed ? ” continued M. Tricamp, raising his voice.

“ But I never go out at all, Mijnheer.”

“ Did n't you go out at all this evening ? ”

“ I was n't outside the house ; besides, it was very stormy, and at my age one does n't venture out in a blinding rain-storm for fun.”

“ Then you were in your room ? ”

“ No, Mijnheer, I was in the kitchen most of the day, knitting by the stove.”

“ And you never left the kitchen for a moment ? ”

"Not for a minute—until I went upstairs to bed."

"Is your eyesight good?"

"Mijnheer?" questioned Gudule, not having heard aright.

"I asked you if you had good eyes," repeated M. Tricamp.

"Oh! I can see all right, even if I am a little bit hard of hearing. And I have a good memory, too—"

"So you have a good memory, eh? Then tell me who called here to-day."

"Oh, there was the postman—and a neighbor who called to borrow a pie-plate—and Petersen who came to ask something of Christina."

"Indeed! And who is this Petersen?"

"A neighbor, Mijnheer; a night-watchman; my master knows him well."

"Yes," said Balthazar, addressing the sergeant, "he is the poor devil who lost his wife a month ago, and his two little children are both sick. We help the poor fellow from time to time."

"And this Petersen was in the house to-day?"

"No, Mijnheer," replied Gudule; "he only spoke to Christina from the sidewalk."

"And what did he tell her?"

"I did not hear, Mijnheer."

"And did no one else call after him?"

Gudule asked him to repeat the question, then she replied:

"No one at all."

"And where was Christina while you were knitting?"

"Why, the dear child was looking after the cooking for me, as I was too tired to move from my chair. She is so kind and obliging!"

"But she was n't in the kitchen all the time?"

"No, Mijnheer, she retired to her own room towards evening."

"So you say she retired to her own room towards evening?"

"Yes, Mijnheer, to dress for supper."

"And—did she remain in her room a long time?"

"About an hour, Mijnheer?"

"An hour?"

"Yes, fully an hour, Mijnheer."

"And you heard nothing during all this time?"

"I beg your pardon—"

"I asked you if you heard any noise—for instance, the sound of some one hammering wood?"

"No, Mijnheer."

"Yes, gentlemen, she is as deaf as a door-post," said M. Tricamp, turning towards the young men. Then he approached Gudule, and raising his voice he added:

"I suppose the storm was at its height at this time?"

"Oh, yes, Mijnheer, I could hear the thunder plain enough."

"She has no doubt confounded the noise made by the thief, in breaking in, with the roar of the elements," he muttered to himself. "And then?" he asked of Gudule in a louder voice.

"And then, Mijnheer, night had fallen and the storm raged furiously; master had not returned. I was terribly frightened; I got down on my knees and said my prayers. Just then Christina came down from her room; she was as white as a ghost, and was trembling all over. Then the thunder burst overhead and deafened me—"

"Ah! then you noticed that she was nervous?"

"Certainly! And so was I; the storm frightened me almost to death. Shortly after this, master knocked at the door, and Christina let him in. Now, Mijnheer, this is all I know, as sure as I am an honest woman."

"Don't cry, my good woman; I tell you that no one suspects you."

"But then, master, who do they suspect? Merciful Father!" she exclaimed as the truth flashed upon her. "Then they accuse Christina?"

No one answered her.

"Ah!" continued the old woman; "you do not answer me! Master, is this true?"

"My poor Gudule!"

"And *you* let them accuse little Christina!"

continued the old woman, who would not be silenced. "That angel of kindness and loveliness sent to us from Heaven!"

"Come, come, if it is not you it must be her," brutally interrupted Tricamp.

"Oh, why don't they blame me? I am an old woman and have not long to live; but this child is innocent and I won't let them touch a hair of her head! Ah, Mijnheer Balthazar, do not let them touch Christina, she is a sacred trust. Don't listen to that bad man—he is the cause of all this trouble!"

M. Tricamp made a sign to his men, and they seized the old woman by the arm. Gudule advanced a few steps, then fell on her knees near the fireplace, weeping and bemoaning her fate. M. Tricamp then ordered his men not to disturb the woman as she knelt there offering up a prayer to Heaven that Christina should not suffer for a crime committed by another.

CHAPTER IX.

"You see," remarked the agent of police, turning towards Cornelius, "that no one has called here whom we might have cause to suspect—neither the postman, the neighbor, or that fellow Petersen. It therefore remains between the old woman and the young girl; and, as I do not believe the old one is sufficiently active to

perform gymnastics, I beg you to draw your own conclusions."

"Oh, do not ask me to form an opinion; I really do not know what to think; it seems as if it were all a frightful nightmare!"

"I don't know whether it is a dream, but it strikes me that I am pretty wide awake, and that I reason remarkably well."

"Yes, yes," said Cornelius, pacing nervously up and down the room, "you reason remarkably well!"

"And my suppositions are logical enough."

"Yes, yes, very logical."

"And so far I have not made a single error. Therefore, you must admit that the young girl is guilty."

"Well then, no!" eagerly replied Cornelius, looking the sergeant square in the face. "No! I will never believe her guilty, unless she says so herself! And God knows—she might declare that she is guilty, and yet I would protest that she is innocent!"

"But," objected the sergeant, "what proofs can you produce? I, at least, have proven the truth of my assertions."

"Ah! I know nothing, I can prove nothing," replied Cornelius, "and everything you have said, every proof you have produced, is not to be disputed—"

"Well then?"

"But my conscience revolts against your assertions nevertheless, and something seems to cry out: 'No, no, her dear face, her despair, her agony, are not those of a guilty wretch, and I swear that she is innocent! I can't prove it—but still I am sure of it, and I will assert it in the face of the most damaging evidence! Oh, do not listen to her accusers! They will lie away the future of a noble girl! Their logic is born of earthly evidence—mine comes direct from heaven, and is therefore true!'"

"Then—"

"Do not heed them," continued Cornelius, whose excitement was now intense; "and remember that when your pride is ready to dispute the existence of a God, something within you cries out to affirm *that He does exist!* And now since this voice proclaims the innocence of the girl, how could I suspect her?"

"If the police reasoned like that, criminals would have an easy time of it."

"Oh, I will not attempt to convince you," added Cornelius; "continue your work! Go on with your search for evidence, and pile your proofs one upon the other in your efforts to crush this unfortunate child; on the other hand, I will begin my search to discover the proofs of her innocence!"

"Then I would advise you not to include this among the latter."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I found this black pearl—"

"Where?"

"In her bureau drawer."

"Yes, my friend," interrupted Balthazar, "he found it in my presence in her drawer."

Cornelius eagerly seized the pearl. The proof was so convincing that he no longer knew what to believe. The miserable little pearl burned his hand as though it were a red-hot coal—he looked at it instinctively without being able to see it—and yet he could not remove his eyes from this bit of damning evidence! Balthazar took him by the hand, but Cornelius did not appear to notice him. He never removed his eyes from the pearl, yet the sight of it filled him with horror.

"Cornelius!" exclaimed Balthazar, now thoroughly alarmed; but Cornelius pushed him roughly aside, and leaned over so as to obtain a better view of the pearl.

"What's the matter with you, Cornelius?" Balthazar asked again.

"Get out of my way!" and he once more pushed his friend aside as he rushed to the open window.

Balthazar and Tricamp exchanged a knowing glance—while Cornelius, feverish with excitement, rushed into the study.

"He has gone mad!" grumbled M. Tricamp as he followed him with his eyes. "Will you

permit me to give a drink of curacoa to my men? It is daylight now, and the air is somewhat chilly."

"With pleasure. There is the bottle; let the men help themselves."

Tricamp then left the room. As Balthazar turned around, he perceived old Gudule still kneeling in the corner. A moment later he had rejoined Cornelius in the study.

Cornelius was examining the handle of the knife with the greatest attention. This scrutiny lasted several minutes; then, without offering a word of explanation, he mounted a chair and proceeded to examine the piece of broken wire.

"Where is the bell?" he suddenly demanded of Balthazar, who really believed that his friend had taken leave of his senses.

"In the hallway."

Cornelius pulled the wire a number of times, but the bell did not ring.

"Ah! she did not overlook anything; she has removed the tongue!" remarked Balthazar with a sneer.

Cornelius, still as silent as a sphinx, continued his examination of the wire; it passed through a little tin tube about the size of a putty-blower; the wire moved freely in this groove, therefore there was nothing out of gear in that direction.

"Now, look at the bell and tell me if it rings when I pull the wire."

Balthazar went out into the hall and did as directed.

"Does it move?" called out Cornelius.

"Just a little," answered Balthazar, "but it can't ring, because the bell is turned upside down, with the tongue in the air."

"Good! We will look into that later. Now, steady the secrétaire while I get up there."

Then, with the assistance of the knife, Cornelius drew himself up painfully to where the paper had been removed, as if he desired to test the practicability of such an ascension.

Just then Gudule set up a frightful howl outside; Balthazar left his friend in mid-air, while he ran out to see what was the matter.

"Oh, master," she cried; "she has just escaped!"

"Christina?"

"Yes, Mijnheer, I saw her as she fled through the garden. Make haste and follow her before it is too late!"

"The little serpent!" exclaimed M. Tricamp; "she was playing possum then after all. Now then, my lads, let me see how soon you will catch her."

All the officers started off, with Tricamp at their head; while Balthazar ran into the young girl's room, to assure himself that she was no longer there.

Instead of Christina, Balthazar was confronted

by Cornelius, who had entered the room through the opening in the partition.

"That's right! Look for her, my friend. You must now admit that she is guilty, as she has just run away."

"I tell you that she is innocent," exclaimed Cornelius as his eyes flashed fire; "we alone are guilty—for we have wrongfully accused an innocent person!"

"You must be mad!"

"You will not say so after I have proven to you that I know the name of the thief," continued Cornelius, as he smiled sarcastically at the doubts expressed on Balthazar's countenance. "And I am going to tell you how he entered and how he went out! In the first place, he did not come in by this window, nor by that opening; he simply glided down your chimney, and, via the fireplace, reached your study."

"You say that the thief entered my study by the chimney?"

"Certainly! And as he is celebrated for his weakness for metals, his first move was to gather your gold and your silver; then he forced the steel lock of your portfolio and the iron lock of your secrétaire, and gathering together your florins, your ducats, and your jewels, he carried them off, leaving your knife as a memento of his little visit. From the study, he jumped into the room of this unfortunate child, dashing through

the woodwork and paper in his mad flight, and dropping the pearl in this drawer as he passed through here.—And if you want to know what has become of your medallion, look!”

He drew aside the curtains of the bed and pointed to the little copper crucifix suspended on the wall, and which was now completely gilded in melted gold.

“This is what he did with your medallion!—”

And, plunging his hand into the receptacle for the holy water, he drew out the glass covers of the medallion, which were moulded together with the flower in the centre.

“And this is what he did with the rest!”

Balthazar gazed upon his friend with astonishment. He did not know what to expect next.

“And now, if you want to know how he went out,” continued Cornelius as he dragged him to the window, “look!”

He pointed to the top pane of the window, which was pierced by a little hole about the size of a cent.

“But what does all this mean!” exclaimed Balthazar, who began to believe that he, too, was taking leave of his senses. “Who did this?”

“Why, you fool! Can’t you see that *the house has been struck by lightning!*!”

Balthazar might have been struck by lightning, too, for that matter, as he was more dead than alive, when he at last realized how they had all

been deceived by the hand of Nature. A loud noise was heard outside. They both rushed to the window and looked out.

A crowd surrounded the house as four officers, carrying a stretcher, on which Christina was lying, entered the front door !

CHAPTER XI.

THE poor child in her despair had thrown herself into the Amstel, but Petersen the night-watchman, like the brave lad that he was, had sprung into the water and pulled her out.

After she had been put to bed, and had received a visit from a physician, who prescribed plenty of rest and quiet, M. Tricamp approached the young men.

"As the young girl is not in a condition to be removed to-day, my men and I will retire."

"Why, has n't Cornelius told you? Christina is innocent and we know the thief."

"The thief!" exclaimed M. Tricamp, "and who is it?"

"Why, the lightning, of course!" laughingly replied Balthazar.

M. Tricamp opened his eyes in amazement, as he repeated:

"The lightning?"

"Why, naturally!" replied Cornelius; "you apply the study of psychology in your criminal

researches, while I employ my knowledge of meteorology—that 's the only difference in our methods."

"And you pretend to say that all this was caused by lightning?" demanded M. Tricamp, who was losing his temper.

"Why, all this is as nothing when compared with some of the capers lightning has been known to cut. How about the tack it tears up from the carpet and drives through a mirror without cracking the glass; and the key it takes out of the lock and conceals in the ice-box; and the package of cigarettes it delicately removes from the bronze ash-receiver which it has ignited; and the silver it volatilizes through the silken meshes of a purse without damaging the latter; and the needles it magnetizes so thoroughly that they run after a hammer; and the pretty little hole it made in Christina's window; and the wall-paper it so deftly disarranged to furnish you with your wonderful clue; and this medallion, the glass of which it melted without injuring in the least the flower it contained, thus forming the most beautiful specimen of enamel I have ever seen, and making a finer wedding gift than the most skilled artist could have turned out; and finally, the gold of the medallion which gilded Christina's crucifix!"

"Humbug!" protested M. Tricamp, "it is impossible! And how about the package! The

package she was seen to hand a man from out the window?"

"The man is here to answer that question himself!"—and a perfect Colossus entered the room.

"Petersen!"

"At your service. And the package contained some old dresses for my little children."

"Old clothes, that's excellent!" replied Tricamp, who was fairly boiling over with rage. "But how about the gold and the silver, the ducats and the florins, and the other jewels; where are they?"

"Zounds!" exclaimed Cornelius, striking his forehead; "that reminds me—"

He sprang on the table, and reaching up to the overturned bell, he suddenly exclaimed:

"Here they are!"

A huge ingot of gold, silver, and jewels fell on the floor from the bell, together with the tongue of the bell, which had been detached, the whole being melted solidly together.

M. Tricamp picked up the ingot and examined it carefully.

"But tell me," he asked, "what put you on the track?"

Cornelius smiled as he replied:

"This black pearl, Mijnheer, which you handed to me, defying me to prove Christina's innocence in the face of such evidence."

"The black pearl!"

"Exactly, Mijnheer! Do you see this little white speck? Well, that was caused by electricity! And, thanks to this little speck, I have succeeded in saving the honor of a fellow-being."

"You must accept my congratulations," said he, bowing humbly; "the man of science is more far-sighted than the police, and in future I intend to add the study of natural philosophy and meteorology to my other acquirements. Were it not for this undoubted proof I might have committed a still more serious error. I actually began to suspect that you were her accomplice."

And then M. Tricamp withdrew, in order not to show his embarrassment, and Gudule rushed in to say that Christina was better and had heard everything through the partition.

"My little Christina," said Balthazar as he knelt by her bedstead a little later, "if you do not want to make me unhappy pray do not refuse to accept this little token of my esteem."

And he placed the ingot of melted gold and jewels on the bed.

Christina hesitated.

"Oh, you must take it, for you need a dower—" exclaimed Balthazar as he pressed her hand.

"That is, if you will accept me for a husband?" added Cornelius.

Christina did not reply, but she gave the man who had saved her honor a look which certainly did not mean—*No*.

